


CHANGE AND THE CHANGELESS

ARTICLES, ESSAYS, AND SERMONS BY JAMES McDOWELL RICHARDS



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J. McDowell Richards

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FOREWORD

"Not farewell, but fare forth. The Golden Age is not in the past but in the future."

As he had done so many times before, at his retirement dinner Dr. J. McDowell Richards shared with the friends who had gathered to honor him his insight into the deeper meaning of the occasion. His words were a clear challenge to see a new vision of God's promises.

Because he has been so often prophet as well as teacher and statesman, many have asked that the fruit of his study and experience be gathered together. In response to these requests the Board of Directors of Columbia Seminary asked Dr. Richards to make a selection of his sermons, addresses, and papers for publication.

Those who have helped with the publication of this volume are happy to present it to the Church as a tribute to Dr. Richards and a continuation of his ministry.

CHRONOLOGY

JAMES McDOWELL RICHARDS

- 1902 November 6, Born Statesville, North Carolina to Charles Malone Richards, D. D., and Jane McDowell Richards both of whose families have been distinguished for many years in the public life of South Carolina.
- 1917 Graduated from High School, Davidson, North Carolina
- 1918 Graduated McCallie School, Chattanooga, Tennessee and entered college at age 15.
- 1918-1922 Attended Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina, Editor Davidsonian, Member Y. M. C. A. Cabinet, Kappa Alpha, Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Beta Kappa; first honor graduate Class 1922 with B.A. degree at age 19.
- 1922-1923 Attended Princeton University, M.A. degree in English Literature.
- 1923-1926 Attended Christ Church College, Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar; B.A. 1925 and qualified for M.A. awarded 1930.
- 1926-1928 Attended Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, B.D. 1928.
- 1928 July 31, ordained a minister of Presbyterian Church, U.S. at Clarkesville, Georgia by Athens Presbytery.
- 1928-1930 Served as pastor at Clarkesville, Nacoochee and Helen, Georgia.
- 1929 December 31, married Mary Evelyn Knight, Safety Harbor, Florida.
- 1931 July 26, Birth of son, James McDowell, Jr.
- 1931-1932 Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Thomasville, Georgia.
- 1932 Elected President and Professor of Practical Theology, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia at age 29.
- 1933 Honorary Doctor of Divinity, Davidson College.
- 1935-1949 Member General Assembly's Committee on Social and Moral Welfare, later known as the Committee on Christian Relations.

- 1936 Elected a Trustee of Davidson College. In 1940 he was elected President of this Board and served continuously in that capacity until 1966.
- 1937 Delegate to World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Toronto, Canada.
- 1938 December 10, Birth of a daughter, Mary Makemie. Completed first financial campaign.
- 1939 Became one of the Founders of the University Center in Georgia with Agnes Scott College, Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Georgia, the Atlanta Art Association and Columbia Theological Seminary as participating institutions. Served as Chairman of its Council of Presidents in 1950 and 1965.
- 1940 Moderator, Atlanta Presbytery, Presbyterian Church, U.S.
- 1942 Completed second financial campaign.
- 1944 Completed third financial campaign.
An organizer and for some years a Director of the Southern Regional Council with membership continuing until the present.
- 1944 Member Editorial Council, which instituted publication of *Theology Today* with membership continuing until the present.
- 1946 April 10, birth of son, Charles Malone. Completed fourth financial campaign.
- 1941-1950 Representative of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. on Executive Committee, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Vice President 1942-44.
- 1947 Elected to Board of Corporators Presbyterian Ministers Fund, Philadelphia, a capacity in which he continues to serve. President Presbyterian Educational Association of the South.
- 1947-1949 Chairman, Executive Committee on Negro Work, Presbyterian Church, U.S.

- 1948 Delegate to World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Geneva, Switzerland. Moderator Synod of Georgia, Presbyterian Church, U.S.
- 1949 A participant in the establishment of the Protestant Radio Center (now Radio and Television) for which he has served continuously as a trustee from that time until the present.
- 1950-1951 President of the Atlanta Christian Council.
- 1950 A member of the Constituting Convention of the National Council of Churches.
- 1950-1951 Representative of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. on the General Board of the National Council of Churches.
- 1952 Completed fifth financial campaign.
- 1950-1956 Member Board of Church Extension, Presbyterian Church, U.S.: Chairman Board of Church Extension, 1953-56.
- 1954 Delivered Abner McGehee Lectures, Alabama Bible Society, Montgomery, Alabama.
- 1955-1956 Moderator General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, U.S.
- 1956 Honorary LL.D., King College.
- 1957 Completed sixth financial campaign.
- 1957-1966 Member Board of World Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S. Chairman Committee on Candidates, 1960-1966.
- 1957 Co-author Atlanta Manifesto.
- 1958 Completed endowment Peter Marshall Chair of Homiletics.
- 1959-1960 President Georgia Council on Human Relations.
- 1961 Sent as a representative of the Board of World Missions to evaluate situation in the Congo after independence.
- 1966-1971 A leader in planning and organizing the Atlanta Theological Association, a cluster consisting of the Candler School of Theology, The Interdenominational Theological Center, Erskine Theological Seminary and Columbia Seminary.

- 1967 Elected to Board of Directors Presbyterian Ministers Fund, Philadelphia, an office which he continues to hold. Launched second \$5 million Campaign which passed \$2 million by date of retirement.
- 1968 Edited *Solio Deo Gloria* honoring W.C. Robinson then retiring from Faculty of Columbia Seminary.
- 1969 Delivered Elting Lectures, First Presbyterian Church, Florence, Alabama.
- 1971 July 1, retired after 39 years as President and by Board action became President Emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary. In connection with his retirement, Dr. Richards was honored in turn by Synods of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Mississippi; Columbia Friendship Circle, Women of Synod of Georgia, Students and Faculty; and, on June 25 by an Appreciation Dinner at the Regency Hyatt Hotel in Atlanta with several hundred friends present from across the South.
- 1971-1972 Chairman of Davidson College Living Endowment Campaign.
- 1932-1971 Under the leadership of Dr. Richards Columbia Seminary added her present Library, the South Wing of Campbell Hall, Georgia Hall, Florida Hall, 3 student apartment buildings, 13 Faculty Homes, the Athletic Field and Tennis Courts, all present drives, walks and parking areas, and the remodeling of Simons-Law Hall. The total cost of the buildings and improvements mentioned was approximately \$2,500,000. In the same period Mission Haven was erected on the campus and the Seminary's endowment fund rose from approximately \$300,000, against which there was an indebtedness of more than \$100,000, to over \$5,000,000. The Faculty was increased from six to twenty one full time members plus six part-time and three visiting instructors. The annual average enrollment of students quadrupled during his administration.



1940

This address was delivered before the Rotary Club of Atlanta, Georgia in connection with its observance of Armistice Day in November of 1940. In the light of the tragic history of the years since that date, it makes melancholy reading. At the same time, the challenge presented by the speaker and the hope which he expressed are still applicable in today's world.

It is with inevitable and irrepressible sadness that we celebrate Armistice Day in the world of 1940. All of us here remember the thrill of gladness which came to us on the November 11th which lies only twenty-two years behind us. It is doubtful that there ever was, or perhaps ever will be again, such spontaneous and whole-hearted joy among so many men as on that fateful day. Whether the news of peace came to us on the actual field of battle or in the tranquil surroundings of the homeland, it brought to all alike a sense of relief from the crushing burden and horror of war; a feeling of hope that a better world was about to be born. It is little wonder that through succeeding years America has paused to celebrate the recurrence of this date.

Today we are confronted by a different world from that of which we dreamed. On the surface of things there would appear to be little reason to observe Armistice Day in 1940. The things in which we rejoiced in 1918 are all "gone with the wind." It would seem that those are not without reason who speak of November 11th as "the lost holiday"; "the symbol only of broken promises and blasted hopes." The millions who laid down their lives in the first World War appear now to have died in vain, for scarcely one of the ends which they sought endures today. The cessation of hostilities which came then has proven to be in reality an "armistice" rather than a "peace." Today the nations of Europe and of Asia are locked in conflict more awful than the last. The very railroad dining car in which the Armistice of 1918 was signed has this year been used for the signing of another armistice, with the roles of victor and vanquished reversed, and stands today in Berlin as a symbol of a different triumph. Our own country, which had fancied herself secure regardless of what might come in Europe, has within recent months passed a peace time conscription bill for the first

time in her history, and today arms herself with feverish haste against perils which are all too real.

Yes, it would seem that this is one holiday which might better be buried and forgotten, yet I make bold to suggest that this is not the case. Armistice Day in other years has been a celebration looking to the past. In this year, and in those which are to come, it should be an observance pointing to the future. It has been a reminder of victory and accomplishment, it must become a symbol of faith and of hope.

It is an easy thing in such a day as this to become disillusioned and cynical. It would be better for us to remember that it is not ideals which have failed; it is men who have betrayed ideals. The building of a better world is a more difficult task today than it was in 1918, but it is a task which never came more fully as a divine imperative than now.

Today we are feverishly preparing for war. We hope and pray that the preparation will be enough, yet there is no thoughtful one among us who does not know that the danger of conflict is great. It is well that at such a time we should take the long look; that, while not closing our eyes to the ugly realities of our present situation, we should also keep them open to what lies beyond the immediate future. However long the present struggle may be, the day will come when it too must end. It is to that day that our thoughts should be directed. Armistice Day has been a celebration of a peace that we thought had come. Let us make it a promise of a real peace that is to be.

The ideals which stirred the hearts of Americans in 1917 are seldom spoken of today without a smile of disenchantment, or a sneer of superior wisdom. We were fighting a "war to end war", we were crusaders seeking to "make the world safe for democracy." Let men deny it or deride as they will, those *were* the purposes which moved our people to undivided effort, and those *were* the ends for which thousands of our men were willing to die. There are pages enough in our history which are not glorious, but America has no reason to be ashamed of the motives which animated her people during those days of conflict.

The tragedy of it all is found in what came after the first Armistice. This is no time for recriminations and for bitterness. Recognizing that there was folly and blindness among the post-war leaders of Europe, let us also admit that there was blindness and folly in America as well. We dreamed that we could live in isolation from other nations, and we have

awakened too late from our dreaming. It is possible that if America had entered The League of Nations the history of the world would not have been different. On the other hand, it is possible that American strength and American freedom from the bitter heritage of European History might have opened the way for a new and permanent structure of peace while there was yet a chance. At very least we could know today that we had made an honest effort. Under the circumstances, America cannot escape a very large measure of responsibility for the disaster which has come. Truly we won the war, and lost the peace. Hence it must needs be in humility and in penitence of spirit that we celebrate Armistice Day in 1940.

He must be bold indeed who would prophesy what lies before our country and our world in the immediate future. Perhaps suffering and anguish of spirit will come to us as they have to other nations. It may be that America too must know a baptism of blood. Certainly we have not deserved our privileged position more than others. However that may be, I dare to prophesy today that, in the end, tyranny and oppression will not prevail. Ours is a moral universe. The very stars in their courses fight against greed and falsehood, hatred, violence and inhumanity. The ideals for which thousands of men were then willing to give their all may seem to be dead and buried. It is our faith that they shall have a glorious resurrection.

Let us not forget that our day owes a debt to, and has received a responsibility from those who died in the War of 1914-18. It is for us to rekindle in our more complex world the torch which, flung from their "failing hands", has all but been extinguished. It is the torch of democracy and of freedom; it is the torch of humanity and of brotherhood; it is the torch of justice and of ultimate peace. Let us live and sacrifice, as they sacrificed and died, toward the coming of the day when

"the war drum throbs no longer, and the
battle flags are furled,

In the Parliament of Man, the Federation
of the World!"

1940

On October 14, 1940, Dr. Richards preached this sermon as retiring Moderator of Atlanta Presbytery at a meeting held in the West End Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. His theme was suggested by scornful remarks concerning Negroes which had then recently been made by the late Eugene Talmadge, who was at that time Governor of Georgia, which were headlined and reported in the local press. The sermon was printed by order of Atlanta Presbytery for distribution among its member churches. Later that year it was published and circulated by the Southern Interracial Commission and it was reprinted in 1946 by the Southern Regional Council, the successor to that Commission. The circulation of the sermon in these various editions amounted to approximately 50,000 copies. The extent of the injustices cited in the sermon and the fact that even the comparatively mild demands made in it were considered bold and startling in the 1940's are enough to remind us that changes have come with amazing rapidity since the Supreme Court's 1954 Ruling on segregation in public education. Enough injustices remain, however, to make the spirit and the central thrust of "Brothers in Black" significant for our day.

"Where is. . . thy brother?"

This query comes to us out of one of the oldest and most familiar stories of Scripture. It is the second question recorded in the Bible as having been asked by God. In the third chapter of Genesis we find it stated that, when man had first made the choice between good and evil and had fallen into sin, God called him in his place of hiding in the Garden saying, "Where art thou?" In the succeeding chapter comes the story of Cain and Abel in which the first-born son commits murder. Then it is that God addresses a second question to man and asks: "Where is Abel, thy brother?"

The sequence of these questions might almost be regarded as

symbolic, so constantly do they recur in the lives of individuals and of our race. God is continually calling to man in his sin and his need, to stab his conscience wide awake with the inquiry, "Where art thou?" and it is in the honest facing of that question that salvation begins. Man cannot face it honestly without coming to realize that he stands in danger of judgment. So is it with the second question. It is the logical completion of the first in so far as Christian faith is concerned, and often provides itself the real answer to it. The position and the condition of the Christian's brother are always a revelation of the former's own state in the sight of God.

The relationship between true faith and brotherly love is suggested again and again in Scripture. Nowhere is it more strongly emphasized, however, than in the First Epistle of John, which is at once a message insisting upon belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a clarion call for that belief to make itself manifest in love of one's fellow man. We are faithful for the most part in preaching the necessity of that faith, but too often we forget to emphasize the test of true belief: "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Significantly John went on to speak of Cain, the murderer who had insolently asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?", as an example of all that Christians ought not to be.

"Where is thy brother?" The question is one which has no limits in so far as the Christian is concerned. It comes home to us with telling force concerning those of our own households; it holds an especial meaning for us as we think of the members of our particular churches; it needs to be faced in our thought of all men. For this little while, however, I want to ask that we limit it to a very specific group and face it, not on a basis of self justification, but as the facts require us to answer it before the throne of God. "Where is thy brother in black?"

It need not be said that there is a very special reason for us to ask that question here today. We have seen the racial issue raised in our own section in forms which give cause for grave concern and for deepest shame. In several of our states high officials have used the racial issue to further their own political ends without regard to the ultimate results of their action in human misery. Insulting and humiliating statements concerning the Negro have been made in various public places and even in the

Senate of the United States. We cannot estimate how much has been done to aggravate prejudices and to increase evils which were already sore enough. I am not undertaking to discuss politics here. I speak today because Christian principles and spiritual interests are at stake. These actions of political leaders are but the natural outcome of a racial philosophy which, though contrary to all Christian principles, is all too commonly held by the man in the street and too little opposed by the man in the pew. The Church of Jesus Christ has not given the leadership which her Faith demands of her in making this kind of philosophy impossible.

It need hardly be argued in this company that the Negro is indeed a brother of the Christian. He holds that place first of all by creation. Science and Scripture are apparently at one in holding that all branches of the human race had a common origin. Black and yellow and white are brothers by creation. Like it or not, we cannot escape the facts. Beyond this, however, these dark skinned neighbors are many of them "brothers" in the strictest scriptural and theological sense. They are believers in Christ as Lord and Savior; they are members of His Church; in the lives of many of them the unmistakable fruits of the Spirit are manifest. With the same right as we, they pray, "Our Father, which art in Heaven," and by the same Adoption they are received into His family.

Where is thy brother in black? In a physical sense it is easy to answer that question. He is with us here in America, 13,000,000 strong. Approximately 10,000,000 of his race are with us still in the South in spite of the rapid migration of the Negro to the Northern States in recent years. He came as an unwilling guest, and he is here through no fault of his fathers or his own. This brother was brought to our shores by force for our selfish profit. Never has there been a clearer visitation of the sins of the fathers upon children than in what has followed the slave traffic and the institution of slavery in this country. It brought the Civil War with its useless slaughter of half a million men; it caused the impoverishment of the South; it left us a legacy of hatred and of prejudice. For all of that the Negro is here. He is a neighbor to us all, and our contacts are without number. It is the Negro maid and cook who contribute to the comfort of our homes, and we entrust them again and again with the dearest possession of our hearts—our children. To the eternal credit of the Negro let it be said that this confidence is not betrayed, but that almost invariably children so entrusted are guarded with care and devotion. It is the Negro laborer who

tills a great part of our fields and harvests our crops; the Negro janitor who cares for our schools and our churches; the Negro songster who stirs us with the strains of jazz or utters the deep longings of our souls in some well loved spiritual. Where is thy brother in black? For better or for worse, he is all about us here today, and his life is inextricably interwoven with ours.

When we turn from the physical aspects of racial distribution, however, we may best answer the question concerning our brother by saying that he is in need. That simple statement is an accurate description of almost every aspect of his life. The Negro as a race is sorely in need of material things. Two-thirds of all Negro wage earners are found in two low paid occupations, farming and domestic service. Seventy-five percent of all Negro farm operators are tenants, and the ratio of farm ownership among this people is about the same today as it was thirty years ago. Often the Negro who does the same work as a white person receives much smaller pay for his services. Even in days of national emergency the Negro is virtually excluded from employment on many defense projects. On the one hand he is refused jobs because he is not a skilled laborer; on the other he is denied admission to training schools because it is said that there is no place for Negroes in skilled positions. As in so many other areas of life, he faces a vicious circle from which there seems to be almost no means of escape. Sadly enough, the handicaps imposed upon him in the North have perhaps been even greater than in the South. Efforts have been made in places to take away from the Negro many of the opportunities by which he once earned his livelihood, as in the passage of laws in cities forbidding him to cut the hair of white people, and in the replacement of Negroes by whites as hotel employees. Often even the college graduates of the race can secure only menial tasks at a rate of pay which would hardly be adequate for the most ignorant field hand. While our failures in the South may not be worse than those of other sections, the fact that the Negro proportion in our population is much higher makes the situation more serious for us. Booker Washington was right when he said, "You cannot keep a man in the ditch unless you are willing to stay there with him." Low income for Negroes means lower purchasing power as well, and this in turn means less wealth for the whites. This is unquestionably one of the reasons why the per capita income of thirteen Southern States in 1942 stood at \$539 as against an average of \$852 per capita for the country as a whole.

Inevitably this brother in black stands in need of all those things which money can buy. We rejoice today in the fact that here and there in our cities housing projects are being undertaken for blacks as well as for whites, yet what has been done is only the barest beginning in our cities and has not even touched the rural areas. Our government in its housing projects has fixed upon a house \$3,000 to \$4,000 as necessary to provide minimum accommodations for an American family, but the average value of houses occupied by Negro tenants is \$500.00. If the value is slightly higher in some of our cities, one has only to drive through Negro sections to know how miserable are the quarters in which most of these people live. What wonder that health is poor! What wonder that crime breeds! Indeed, as one considers the circumstances under which these people live, the wonder is not at their failures but at the fact that so many among them manage to maintain self-respect and to live with some degree of decency. Sadly enough most of these buildings—one would hardly call them homes—are owned by white landlords who are often more concerned to secure high profits than to provide for the needs of others.

Again, this neighbor whose skin is dark is in need of medical aid and of health service—how can it be otherwise when his economic circumstances are those described? There is one hospital bed in this country for every 150 whites, but the Negro must get along with one for each 2,000 of his people, yet the illness rate for Negroes is 90 per cent greater than for urban white residents, and 50 per cent greater among rural people. In 1940 the Negro death rate was higher than that for whites by about 35 per cent, while infant mortality for every thousand Negro children in 1940 was 73 as compared with 43 among the same number of whites. The death rate from tuberculosis is from two to five times as high as within our own race, and the prevalence of the social diseases among them is well known. All of this means not only suffering and misery among these people and a tremendous economic loss for our section, but inevitably it means that our own health is endangered. How can it be otherwise when there are more than a million Negroes engaged in domestic service in our homes? The illness which begins in the Negro tenements is by no means certain to stay out of the white mansion. Here, as elsewhere, it is unmistakably true that "he that saveth his life shall lose it."

Where is thy brother in black? He is in need of justice. Justice is far short of that love about which John speaks and of that service to which

the Gospel calls us, yet it represents a level to which we have not yet begun to attain. I need not remind you that in our courts of justice the Negro, for the most part, stands a far greater chance of conviction than a white man against whom the same evidence is produced, and that the punishment meted out for conviction in the one case is likely to be far heavier than in the other. A learned discourse could not say more on this subject than did the aged Negro who remarked: "Justice may be blind, but she ain't entirely color blind." It is a fact which must be confessed with shame that policemen in many of our Southern cities show little respect for the civil or human rights of Negro prisoners. In one of our cities in a recent year a dozen Negroes were killed by officers not one of whom, so far as is known, was officially reprimanded, much less tried for the killing. Mistreatment, abuse, and third degree methods are all too common as we have been reminded so forcefully in recent months by events in prison camps of our own state. It is common practice in our courts for crimes committed against Negroes by Negroes to receive exceedingly light sentences, however severe may be those imposed for offenses against whites. The evident suggestion is that a Negro's life and safety and happiness are so much less important than those of whites that no severe punishment is needed; that crime is a matter of little moment so long as it stays within black borders. We rejoice today that lynching is apparently on the way out, but the records show that within the past fifty years 5,000 persons, the majority of them being black men, many of them probably innocent of any crime have been murdered in this mockery of civilized procedure. Even now it is an event worthy of note if any year passes without a number of lynchings. We have seen the excesses of Nazis against the Jews and mark it down as evidence that an entire nation is degenerate and depraved, but somehow we forget to feel a like indignation when equally helpless individuals here at home are done to death.

The Negro needs justice in the field of education. The laws of Southern States, decree that equal but separate schools shall be provided for white and Negro children. Somehow we have forgotten to note that word "equal." A recent study showed that in eleven Southern States the public school expenditure per child enrolled in 1939-40 averaged \$44.27 for the white child as against \$19.18 for the Negro. In one state it was \$65.96 against \$15.40; in another it was \$47.34 against \$11.39; and in many counties the disproportion is greater, with even some of the money allocated

by the state for colored schools being used for the white instead. In that county of Georgia from which came the author of Uncle Remus, the public school expenditure per white child in a recent year was \$102.39 and for the Negro child \$4.62. Nor can this be justified by saying that the Negro pays less in taxes. The very genius of our republic is that taxes levied on those who have much shall be used to assist those who have little; it is well for such states as Georgia, whose taxable income is low, that this should be the case. Public Schools were established in the first place not for those who had wealth, but for the benefit of the poor child who had none. Moreover, the Negro often does not receive benefits even in proportion to what he does pay.

Other opportunities are denied this race in a similar way. We need not go far afield to find that this is true. So many Negro mothers are compelled to work for a living that their children are often left to care for themselves. Inevitably they sorely need facilities for wholesome play and amusement. What does our own city do in the face of this need? Atlanta, according to the 1940 census, had a population of 302,288 within its city limits, of whom 104,154 were Negroes. To provide for the recreation of its people the city maintains twenty principal parks, containing approximately 1,300 acres, valued at something like \$3,000,000. But listen to this: it maintains exactly one park of fourteen acres, valued at \$41,000 for Negroes. The consequence is that black children must play in the streets or in places which breed vice and crime. Have we forgotten One who said: "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believeth in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea"? In like manner the Negro is all too frequently overlooked when such improvements as street paving, sewers, lights, library, and hospital facilities are voted.

The Negro is in need of the ballot. I am aware that I arouse anger when I say this, but I am convinced that the principle is basic to Christianity and to democracy. A slogan of the American Revolution was "No taxation without representation," yet we have utterly failed to embody this precept in practice. The Negro who can meet the same reasonable requirements as his white neighbor should have the same privilege in voting. This would not mean Negro domination. There is no single state in the South where the Negro makes up as much as half of the population. In only two states was more than 40 per cent of the population colored in 1940. If we

are fearful that the Negro voter would be an easy victim of demagogues, let us consider our own record carefully before casting stones. In areas where the Negro now votes, his record in voting for men of ability and character compares favorably with that of the other race. When we enfranchise the Negro, it will mean that at last we shall have some right to be concerned about the privileges of minorities in other lands, and that our belief in the innate worth of all men will become a practice instead of a mere theory.

But enough of that. He is also in need of kindness and of understanding, this brother in black. How little do we know of the constant humiliation and of the haunting fear which is visited upon this race. I doubt whether any other people under heaven would have been so slow to bitterness under the circumstances. Richard Wright's best seller of a recent year, *Native Son*, is a terrible picture in fiction of what these things can do to the mind and soul of a man. But we need not go to fiction to learn that these things exist. A fine Christian Negro woman whom I know must enlist the aid of her white employer in buying her clothes, because, though she has the necessary money as well as character and culture, she can find no one who will serve her when she goes to a department store. A Negro college student confides that when he and his sweetheart want to go down town, they walk instead of riding the bus, though the distance is long. The reason—that though they pay the same fare, when the white section is filled up, some white man is likely to order the Negro couple out of their seat, and the boy cannot stand the humiliation of that. A Negro minister says that he and his wife go to town on separate street cars. Why? Because always there is danger that some white man will insult his wife, and like any man of proper feelings he will resent that. Yet, if he protests, he may provoke violence which could result in injury to innocent members of his race. Hence, if his wife must be insulted, he decides that it must be in his absence. These are simple but eloquent illustrations of what goes on day by day in our midst.

You will note that in all of this I have not faced the question as to whether the Negro race is inferior to the white. That is beside the point. I would, however, pause to remark that Scripture does not, as some maintain, furnish grounds for believing that the Negro is condemned to inferiority and servitude. The curse which Noah pronounced on one of his sons, as related in the ninth chapter of Genesis, was his own, and there is no

indication it was approved of God. Indeed, as one reads the story it is hard to escape the conclusion that the sin of Noah was greater than that of Ham. No nation has ever made a more rapid advance in an equal length of time than the Negro has since slavery. He has shown that, given an opportunity, he can do far more as a race than he has done. But this also is beside the point. The white is unquestionably the privileged race, whether it be superior or not, and superior privilege, according to Christ, imposes a greater obligation to service. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." "He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant." Did our Lord mean what He said? If so, our greater opportunities only mean that we must render a larger service. If so, it must be our purpose to see that the Negro is given every opportunity to develop in mind and in soul. No other attitude in race relationships can bear the light of Christ's teachings.

Finally, this brother in black stands in need of the Gospel in all its fullness. It is true that nearly six million of his race are members of the church, but too often the religious leadership of the race is poorly prepared and religion itself is little more than emotionalism tinged with superstition. Deeply religious by nature, this tenth man in America needs Jesus Christ. The White Church has not begun to fulfill its task in the evangelization and the Christian education of the Negro. We need to awaken to our responsibility in this matter, but most of all we need to realize that most Negroes today are not going to turn to Christ unless they see that white people really believe the faith which they profess. Russia outlawed real religion largely because the life of churchmen in that nation had manifested so little of the spirit of Christ. What tragedy if our black brother should some day turn his back on Christ because of what he sees, or fails to see, in us!

It is time that we were facing the issue. It is time for some preaching on Christian duty in race relations, my brethren of the ministry. It is time for intelligent, courageous leadership in church and community life, my brethren of the laity. It is time for all of us, as we gather for worship, to take seriously the words of our Lord: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." Has he anything against us today or not, this brother in black.?

1942

In 1934 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., took what was then the highly controversial step of establishing a Committee on Social and Moral Problems. Dr. Richards served as a member of this committee and of its successor, the Committee on Christian Relations, from 1935 to 1949. In this capacity he wrote, or participated in writing, a number of the Committee Reports. His paper on THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN A WORLD AT WAR was prepared shortly after America's entry into World War II and, with only minor amendments, was adopted by the General Assembly at its meeting in 1942.

Stark tragedy has engulfed mankind. Today, almost literally, the entire world is at war. Violence, bloodshed, destruction and death have brought anguish of body, of mind and of spirit to multitudes of our fellow men. Our own nation has been drawn into war and today we too find ourselves compelled to play a part in the grim struggle which for so long we watched with detachment. Never have the nations more sorely needed the Gospel of Christ; never has there been a greater need for the Church and its members to seek in prayer for an understanding of the part which God would have us to play in His world.

The Christian is at once a citizen of earth and a subject of the Kingdom of Heaven. His allegiance and his obligations are two-fold and it is his duty to place these in a proper relationship to one another. That man owes a real duty to his earthly government was taught by our Lord when he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." The earthly duty is subject to testing in the light of the heavenly, for Caesar too is subject to God, but it is a duty none the less.

It is not the task of the Church to state in detail the obligations which the citizen of today must fulfill in loyalty to his country. The Church can only teach the reality of the Christian's duty to the State and urge that this be faithfully performed; it must also insist upon the liberty of individual conscience in determining what this implies. The Church must never

lose sympathy for the Christian who conscientiously objects to war, and must defend his right to this position, so long as he recognizes the obligation owed to his government. Only as he believes that his service to his country must be of a different nature, and as he seeks to perform that service with the same sacrificial devotion as the man who lays down his life on the field of battle, can the position of the pacifist be justified. On that basis it *must* be justified and defended.

In the minds and consciences of the vast majority of Christians today our country is engaged in a necessary war, and for this reason they gladly give their treasures and their lives for its prosecution. The achievement of ultimate victory must never be identified with the bringing in of the Kingdom of Christ, yet it is difficult for us to escape the conclusion that our hopes for a just world order, the preservation of democracy and the freedom of the Church are at stake in this conflict. Under such circumstances our duty appears to be clear. In serving his nation it may rightly be expected of the Christian that he will do more not less than his fellow-citizens who own no allegiance to Christ.

It is with the function of the Church itself in a world at war, and with the duty of a Christian to his God that this report is concerned. It is of vital importance to mankind that the Church should continue to be the Church and not an adjunct of the State. There are some things which the Church cannot do for the world. There are many things which she can and must do within her own membership if she is to be true to the spirit and truth of her Lord, and only as she does these can she expect His blessing to rest upon her work. For the most part these duties are so obvious that there can be little disagreement upon them in principle, yet it is only by constant vigilance and by prayerful endeavor that we shall attain any measure of success in their performance. We would lay these duties humbly but earnestly upon the hearts of Christians in general and of our own Church membership in particular.

1. We must remember that the mission of the Church is spiritual. The nature of the Gospel is not altered by the fact that war has come, nor has God's revealed will suffered change. The services of the Christian sanctuary are held for the glory of God; not for the promotion of national ends. The time which is set for the worship of God and the exposition of God's word is too little at best. That time should be used for its divinely ordained purposes; not for the recruiting of soldiers and workers or for the

furtherance of patriotic endeavors. The part which religion has to play in building the morale of the nation is of vast importance. War has increased rather than diminished the need of our whole population for the healing ministries of the Gospel. Moreover the Church has the privilege and duty of caring for the spiritual needs of these who are serving in our armed forces. The Church, however, will best serve both the nation and individuals as it lifts the eyes of men from their own world and fixes them upon God.

2. In time of war we must maintain within the Church the sense of a brotherhood that transcends racial divisions and national strife. If Christendom had maintained a truer unity within her branches and a closer brotherhood across international lines, war might have been averted. Only by providential circumstance are we members of the Church *in* the United States; let us never forget that we still belong to the Church *of* Jesus Christ. Christians among the peoples of Japan, of Germany, and of Italy, pray, "Our Father" with the same right as we. We must maintain a consciousness of our communion with them. Unlikely though such an occurrence may be, it should be true that if a Christian from a hostile nation should come into one of our Churches he would not find in our services that which would be an obstacle to his worship, but would know himself at home within a circle of Christian fellowship and love. God's house must still be a house of prayer for all people. When the conflict is ended, it is to the church that we must look to assuage hatred and bitterness among peoples now divided, and to restore the shattered unity of our race. To allow ourselves to be separated now, in spirit or in thought, from fellow Christians will inevitably militate against that end.

3. The Church must strive to promote a spirit of love rather than of hatred. It is not an easy thing to love one's enemies. It will be increasingly difficult to do so as suffering and sorrow come to our homes, and bitterness increases. Hatred and vituperation are to be deplored even in secular thought. They have no place in the sermons and prayers of the Church whose Lord has said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." It is right and proper that we should pray for our Country, for our leaders and for the men of our armed forces. Inevitably we hope for victory, though it is better that we should pray for the triumph of justice and of righteousness. Let us not cease to pray earnestly

also for the highest good of those with whom we are at war. How else shall we be able to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"?

4. In the midst of conflict, let us keep continually in mind the fact that the spirit of war is not the spirit of Christ. For most Christians today warfare seems to be definitely the lesser of two evils, but they must not be content while war is necessary. This war would not have come if statesmen and nations had been more far-sighted and more Christian before and after 1918. We must develop within the Church and make effective in a society a Christian conscience in the light of which a just and lasting peace will be possible. It is not too soon for us to begin preparing for the armistice which will come some day. Christians should be studying the nature of the peace which they desire. It is perhaps too early for us to draw blueprints of the world order which will then be possible. It is not too soon to insist that the principles which prevail in the writing of the peace shall be those of justice and of charity rather than of hatred and of vengeance. We must declare our conviction that the formation of a society of nations, in which America will assume her proper responsibility will be necessary if the problems of the post-war world are to be solved and a permanent peace made possible. As Christian citizens we should be studying now the part which we can play in the establishment of an international authority.

5. Today, more than ever, Christians are called upon to minister to human need and to the relief of suffering. So long as warfare continues we can barely touch the fringes of the vast suffering which this conflict has entailed. When peace comes, however, the need will continue for years and our opportunities to do something about it will be multiplied. Nothing could do more to heal the wounds of the nations and to encourage the spirit in which a just and lasting peace would be possible than for such aid to be prompt, generous and sufficient. Certainly a ministry to the needs of our enemies, would be a manifestation of Christian love which the world sorely needs. The Church should begin even now to prepare herself for this task in the name of him who said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

6. In war as in peace the Church must not cease to denounce sin and to proclaim the necessity of repentance. We are grateful that in setting aside the first day of January in this year as a time of special prayer our President specifically requested that we ask forgiveness for our national sins. There is reason to fear that there has thus far been little evi-

dence of any real penitence in the spirit of our people. America has assumed all too easily that, because there is much that is evil in the ideologies and the methods of our opponents, our nation must have the approval of God resting upon it; we have failed to face the blackness of our own sins and to realize that America also has deserved the wrath of God.

America is not guiltless of blame for the coming of the present war. All too often we have refused to face our responsibility for the welfare of other nations and have sought to enjoy peace, safety and prosperity in selfish isolation. In our internal life, evil has been tolerated to a point which has endangered our national existence. The worship and work of the Church have been and are neglected by the masses of our population. The observance of the Christian Sabbath had become largely a thing of the past even before the war, and now, under the guise of national defense, we are in danger of giving up what remains of this Holy Day. The life of the home has decayed in America while our divorce rate continues to be a world scandal. Crimes of violence have almost ceased to be a cause of concern to the public. The liquor industry has been allowed to flourish and is apparently protected by our government from the curtailment and sacrifices required of many constructive business enterprises. Impurity and prostitution have continued until even the physical effectiveness of our military forces, to say nothing of the lives and characters of others, has been endangered. Many political and economic evils remain uncorrected. Injustices inflicted on racial minorities continue to embitter and the need of the under-privileged in all remains largely unmet.

In the face of such conditions it is not enough for us glibly to sing, "God bless America." It is time to remember the words of Scripture. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." America had no reason to believe that she would be spared the suffering brought by war. We had no reason to expect that military success would inevitably be our lot. Victory, we trust, will come to us in the mercy of God, but we must confess that we have not deserved it. Rather do we need to pray, "God be merciful to us, sinners", and to cleanse our national life of public and private evils which cry to high heaven against us. There is need for the Church of Jesus Christ to confess its own failures and to purify its own life that it may more effectively preach repentance to others. Only as our penitence is real shall we have the right to claim God's promise, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray,

and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

7. Finally, let us face the fact that, the conditions of our day constitute a clarion call for the Church to dedicate herself with new devotion to primary and essential tasks—to Evangelism, to Christian Education and to Missions, and to the achievement of brotherhood. If the Church in America had been more effective in winning men to faith in Christ as Saviour and obedience to Him as Lord, sin would not have prevailed so widely in our national life. If Christian people had been willing to sacrifice for Christ a fraction of that which they must now spend for destruction, it is likely that war could have been avoided. Some time before our country was involved in war, and while our President was trying with little success to avert conflict he said to a group of ministers, "I have learned that where there is no Christian conscience there is no basis on which you can appeal for peace." It would be well for us to remember that fact. It is an idle thing to ask that men act as Christians when they do not believe in Christ. The Church cannot declare too strongly to her members the fact that they are to be servants of Christ in social and corporate relationships as well as in their personal lives. Before she can preach these things to others, however, she must first bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

We cannot be sure what the world will be like after the war. We do know it will not be what it has been in the past. For at least a generation society will be in a state of transition and tremendous economic and political changes will take place. In all probability this period will likewise be marked by great movements in the religious world. It will be a time of moral and spiritual danger but also of tremendous opportunity for the Church. If the totalitarian powers should be victorious the Church will not die, but her work may well have to be done under such circumstances as Christians have not known since the days of the Caesars. If, as we expect, the Allied Powers are triumphant, it is likely that the doors of missionary opportunity will be flung wide open and that, if Christians are ready, they may enter in to win whole nations for Christ. In either case, the present hour is one in which the Church must gird herself as never before for the tasks which lie ahead. Let us preach the Gospel of Salvation in season and out of season. Above all, let us renew our faith and rededicate our lives to the service of the living God.

1946

In July of 1946, in a particularly shocking crime, four Negroes—two of them women—were shot down in cold blood at an isolated spot in Walton County, Georgia. Although motives for the crime were not established, it was thought that three of the victims were killed simply because they had witnessed the murder of the first and could have given testimony. No one was even indicted for the crime. The resolution printed here was written by Dr. Richards, presented by him to the Synod of Georgia, and adopted by that body at its meeting in Albany, Georgia during September, 1946.

Be it resolved that the Presbyterian Synod of Georgia in regular annual session expresses its shame and horror at the murder by a mob last July of four Negroes in our state, and its concern that up to the present time none of the perpetrators of this deed has been brought to trial. We would earnestly petition the Chief Executive of our state and all constituted officers of the law to continue the search for the guilty parties until they are found, and would call upon those in authority to be vigilant and faithful in guarding against the repetition of such occurrences. We would declare our unalterable opposition to such acts of mob violence as a violation of the laws of our state, a threat to the processes of organized constitutional government, a breaking of God's Sixth Commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," and a mockery of the spirit of Christ. With penitence we would recognize our own share of responsibility for the condition of society which has made such acts possible in the past, and dedicate ourselves to combat the spirit of hatred out of which such deeds arise.

Be it further resolved that copies of this paper be sent to Governor Arnall, to Governor-Elect Talmadge, and to representatives of the press.

1956

During his year of service as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., Dr. Richards was invited to deliver an address concerning President Woodrow Wilson in connection with a celebration of the Centennial of the latter's birth in Staunton, Virginia. Wilson was born in the manse of the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton while his father was serving as pastor there during the year 1856. This message was presented as a part of the morning worship of that Church on Sunday, January 8, 1956.

It is right and proper for us to remember famous men—particularly if these are also good men. Certainly both of these adjectives can be applied to the man whose memory we honor today—Woodrow Wilson. This twenty-seventh President of the United States was, according to his former pastor, Dr. James H. Taylor, “a man of great spirit and purpose; a man of great intellectual power and moral idealism; a man who was a seer and a prophet of peace, a leader of his people.” The facts of history support his statement.

The birth of a child is a momentous event. As F.W. Boreham wrote years ago: “When a wrong wants righting, or a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, or a continent wants opening, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why long ago, a babe was born in Bethlehem.”

And so today we pause to celebrate the birth of a baby boy, one hundred years ago, in the manse of this First Presbyterian Church of Staunton. This was an event of tremendous significance not merely for the community but for the nation and for the world.

Some of its significance we can see very clearly today. The full and ultimate meaning of the event, however, will only be seen with the passing of additional years—or centuries. It is because of our hopes for the future, of our dreams that war will ultimately be banished from the earth, that it is important for us to remember Woodrow Wilson and to re-emphasize the ideals and the purposes for which he gave his life.

It is not our purpose this morning to trace the history of this life

in detail. Assuredly Woodrow Wilson was one of the great leaders whom this nation has produced; indeed his name deserves to be included in the comparatively small list of the truly great men of history. This statement is not made because he was successful. In a very real sense Wilson was a failure—as were Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many another of the prophets and the seers of history. There is a success that shrivels the soul because its ends are unworthy; there is a failure that glorifies because it is linked up with the ongoing purposes of God; because it is on the side of righteousness and truth and peace. Such failure is always apparent rather than real; temporary rather than permanent.

Woodrow Wilson was a scholar of ability and a political thinker of great clarity and force. His printed works are themselves a worthy monument to his name. He was an educator of distinction, making contributions both as a highly stimulating teacher and as a University President of ability and vision. In the political arena he was, both as governor of New Jersey and as president of the United States, a leader of such force, honesty, and wisdom as to make him worthy of the title, statesman. The record of domestic legislation enacted during his presidential administration is a remarkable one, entirely apart from party considerations. It was legislation based upon his long study of the American Government and motivated by his concern for freedom, for human rights, for truth and for justice. Most of that legislation has endured. It can hardly be doubted that even if—by what he called the irony of fate—war had not come during his administration, this man would still rank as one of our great presidents.

It was as a world statesman, however, that Woodrow Wilson made his chief contribution. At the time of his death an English newspaper editor remarked that here was a “school-teacher who for a little while had the world as his classroom.” Well, the world has yet to master the lesson which he sought to teach. With shame we must acknowledge that our own nation was unprepared for it. There are those among us who believe that if the United States had not deserted his cause, that if our people had entered the League of Nations, that body might have succeeded where it eventually failed. A strong League of Nations might well have averted World War II, with all its tragic aftermath. We cannot be sure. At least we would have the satisfaction of knowing today that we had tried. If the League had failed in spite of our best efforts we would have a better conscience than we can now possess—for the considerations which kept us

out of its membership were essentially selfish and unworthy. But that is past. It is the future which concerns us now. The need for some such Society of Nations as that which this man proposed becomes clearer with every passing year but the task of making it effective is vastly more difficult than it was in 1919. We must make the best use that we can of the United Nations organization, and labor for the day when it can become a really effective instrument for peace and for justice among the nations. The machinery may be altered and improved, but the ideals which Wilson set before us are lasting.

What was the secret of this man's life? Where did he acquire his love for learning and for truth? What was the source of his concern for the rights of the individual and his confidence in democracy as a form of government? Who taught him his devotion to duty, his dedication to justice, his passion for peace? Whence came his unwillingness to compromise when he believed a principle to be involved, and his willingness to sacrifice himself for a cause? The answer is found in the Christian Religion and in the Christian Church.

Wilson's background is familiar to us all. He was descended from Scottish and Scottish-Irish Presbyterians. His ancestors were of martyr stock. They were men and women who feared God and therefore feared no man. They were people who counted no price too great for the right to worship God in freedom of conscience.

Out of that kind of stock he came: in a Presbyterian manse he was born, the son of a pastor of this church. That father, Dr. Joseph R. Wilson was later for thirty-four years the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. and served as its Moderator in 1879. Woodrow Wilson's family background was one of faith, of learning, of simple but genuine piety, and of devotion to God's Word and Work. As in every truly Christian home, the element of discipline was not lacking but the reality of love was supreme. It is hardly possible to overestimate the debt which this man owed to his father and mother. He himself bore eloquent testimony to it and to the love which he had for his parents. His was a worthy heritage, but what a man inherits is not enough. It could be said of Wilson, as he himself said of Robert E. Lee, that "he was an ideal combination of what a man inherits and what he may make of himself."

One may catch a reflection of this man's early home, and sense the importance attached by him to family religion from an address which

he delivered in Philadelphia in 1904. "Religion" he said, "is communicable . . . aside from the operations of the Holy Spirit only by example. You have only to ask yourself what is the effect of a religious profession on the part of a man who does not lead a religious life . . . If those who profess it are the only ones we live with, and they fail to live it, it cannot be communicated except by some mysterious grace of the Holy Spirit Himself. So that no amount of didactic teaching in a home whose life is not Christian will ever get into the consciousness and life of the children. If you wish your children to be Christians, you must really take the trouble to be Christians yourselves." These principles he sought to embody in his own home and family life.

As would be expected in one of such training, Woodrow Wilson was a man who placed one book—The Bible—above all others. The fact that he was one of the great masters of English prose style in our century is not to be explained apart from his familiarity with that pure well of English undefiled—the King James Version. He himself declared that a knowledge of this book is essential to any writier who wishes to attain a style that is vigorous in its simplicity. More than this, he knew that the Bible is essential as the answer to man's spiritual need. Holding up the Bible in a chapel talk at Princeton he declared: "This is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation." However hard the day, he made it his practice not to retire without first reading a portion of Scripture. By such use he wore out three Bibles and upon his knees he daily communed with God.

A great deal of this man's political theory and practice was based upon the Bible. Democracy is never really strong apart from faith in God. The Scriptures were described by Wilson as "the Magna Charta of the human soul." Writing to the men of our Army and Navy in 1917 he declared: "The Bible is the word of life. I beg that you will read it and find this out for yourselves. You will find it full not only of real men and women, but also of things you have wondered about and been troubled about all your life. The more you read it the more it will become plain to you what things are worth while and what things are not; what things make men happy—loyalty, right dealings, speaking the truth, readiness to give everything for what they think their duty, and, most of all, the wish that they may have the real approval of the Christ, who gave everything for them—and the things that are guaranteed to make them un-

happy—selfishness, cowardice, greed and everything that is low and mean. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty.”

Quite naturally, in these words about the New Testament, this man bore testimony also to his faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He was not ashamed to be known as a Christian. His first public confession of Christian faith was made when he was 16 years of age at a service in the humble chapel of Columbia Theological Seminary, then located in Columbia, South Carolina, where his father was at that time a professor. Incidentally, it must have been his attendance upon his father’s lectures and his reading in the seminary library which helped develop his strong and intelligent Christian convictions. When Wilson returned to Columbia as President of the United States and entered again the simple chapel in which he had worshipped often as a boy he said: “I feel as though I ought to take off my shoes. This is holy ground. I have never heard greater speaking in my life than I heard from that rostrum.”

Seldom has any man in prominent place spoken more impressively of what Christ meant to him than Wilson did when visiting Raleigh, North Carolina in 1919. Speaking in connection with the presentation there of a portrait of Stonewall Jackson, he had little to say about that leader as a military genius, but emphasized instead his deep faith and his sincere Christian character. “I do not understand,” he there declared, “how any man can approach the discharge of the duties of life without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Christianity,” he said in one of his best known essays (*When a Man Comes to Himself*) “has liberated the world not as a system of ethics, not as a philosophy of altruism, but by its revelation of the power of pure, unselfish love. Its vital principle is not its code but its motive. Love, clear-sighted, loyal, personal is its breath and immortality. Christ came not to save himself assuredly, but to save the world. His motive, his example, is every man’s key to his own gifts and happiness.”

There are those who make such professions but who attach too small an importance to the church. It was not so with this man. Woodrow Wilson became a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina, during the summer of 1873. To the end of his life, and wherever he went, he was faithful as a member in the support of the work

and the worship of his church. During his years at Princeton he was elected and ordained a ruling elder. When he came to Washington he did not allow the duties of office to alter his attitude or to change his practice of faithful attendance at the worship services of his own congregation.

When as President he assisted in laying the corner-stone of the Central Presbyterian Church—his church-home in Washington—he bore this significant testimony.

“A place of worship is in my mind a place of individual vision and renewal. I do not see how any thoughtful person can be conscious that he sits in the presence of God without becoming aware not only of his relationship to God, as far as he can in this life conceive it, but also of his relationships to his fellow-man. How a man can harden his heart in the exclusiveness of selfishness while he sits in a place where God is in any degree revealed to him I cannot understand.

“I believe that every place of God is sanctified by the repeated self-discovery which comes in the human spirit. As congregations sit under the Word of God and utter the praise of God, there must come to them visions of beauty not elsewhere disclosed. Even the family is too little a circle. The congregation is a sample of the community. There is revealed to a man there what it is his duty to be and to do.

“Therefore I, in looking forward to the privilege of worshipping with you in this place, shall look forward with the hope that there may be revealed to me, as to you, fresh comprehension of duty and privilege.”

Such was his attitude toward public worship. Of private prayer he had said: “I do not see how any one can sustain himself in any enterprise of life without prayer. God is the source of strength to every man, and only by prayer can he keep himself close to the father of his spirit.”

Woodrow Wilson believed profoundly in the vital importance of the Church's mission in the world. He felt that its task and its place were primary, and that apart from the truths which it declared, the foundations of our government could not endure. During his first administration at Washington he accepted an invitation to visit and address the Potomac Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. After words concerning his father and the latter's long service to that Church, he said: “When I think of the great bodies of opinion which sustain the affairs of the world, it seems to me that the heart and nucleus of them is the principle of Christianity, and that therefore the conservation of the great fountain of all that is

just and righteous is one of the most important things conceivable, infinitely more important than the things which those of us do who attempt to take some part in administering the external affairs of the world." Such was the genuine humility of the man who held our highest public office, but who thought of himself first of all as a servant of God.

What wonder that such a man was concerned for liberty, for justice and for peace! What wonder that he would not compromise a principle! What wonder that even in those last sad years of his life, his hopes destroyed, his dreams for a League of Nations rejected by his people, his faith in the ultimate victory of his cause was not shaken! "Do not trouble about the things we have fought for," he said to a friend shortly before the end of his life. "They are sure to prevail. They are only delayed. And I will make this concession to Providence—it may come in a better way than we proposed."

The greatness of this man is explained by his character. Imperfect he undoubtedly was; mistakes he undeniably made, and for them paid dearly; but the loftiness of his ideals, the ultimate rightness of his goals, and the unselfishness of his motives shine forth more brightly today than ever. In that "noble failure" there is inspiration for us all.

I close with words from Wilson's last published article, "The Road Away from Revolution", which appeared in August 1923. They are as fresh and as timely today as when he penned them:

"The sum of the whole matter is this, that our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices which spring out of that spirit. Only thus can discontent be driven out and all the shadows lifted from the road ahead.

"Here is the final challenge to our churches, to our political organizations, and to our capitalists—to everyone who fears God or loves his country. Shall we not all earnestly cooperate to bring in the new day?"

1956

This Sermon, prepared by Dr. Richards as Retiring Moderator of the 95th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., was delivered by him at the opening of the 96th General Assembly in Montreat, N.C., May 31, 1956.

I John 3:23—"And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

The Lord's day had come again in Ephesus. The Christians of the city were gathering according to custom for prayer, for praise, and for the preaching of the Gospel. This time there was a particular sense of expectancy permeating the group; a subdued excitement which could not be mistaken. It had become known that the Apostle John, the well-loved and now ancient disciple of Jesus Christ was to be present and that, in all probability, he would be preaching his last sermon. Already the signs of his approaching end had become evident, and it was clear that his remaining days on earth were few. Surely in this valedictory message there would be great truths set forth which no believer could afford to miss.

At last the great moment arrived. The old man, now too weak to walk, was borne in and placed before the assembly. His hair was snowy white and his face radiant with something of the light of another world. When the time came and he had risen to speak, however, he delivered no lengthy discourse, but only said, "Little children, love one another", lifted his hand in benediction, and was done.

So runs a familiar story concerning the last days of the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is in keeping with another tradition, related by Jerome, who said that in his later years John was accustomed to repeat again and again the same injunction, "Little children, love one another", until some of the believers became weary of it and asked, "Master, why do you always say this?" "Because, he replied, "it is the Lord's commandment, and if only it be done, it is enough."

The traditions mentioned accord well with the writings of John and we may accept them as an accurate clue to the spirit and the emphasis of his later ministry. It is well for us to remember, however, that this man had not always been characterized by sweetness and light. It was not for nothing that his Lord had given to him and his brother James the name, "Boanerges"—"Sons of Thunder". These were men of emotions so strong that they wanted to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan villagers and to consume them, because they would not receive their Lord. It was this same John who forbade a man to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because he followed not with the disciples. A man of enthusiasm, of passion, of temper, he must quite evidently have been. The change wrought in this disciple by Christ was doubtless as great as that in Peter, though we often forget that fact. John was no man of patience and compassion in the beginning. It was the transforming power of Christ, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit which made of him the Apostle of Love.

For this reason one may doubt the full correctness of the tradition concerning John's last message. He would not have preached the obligation without pointing to the power by which it might be performed. If he was accustomed to repeat the words, "Little children, love one another," it was to those who knew the Gospel and had accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Their obligation was implicit in their faith. This is the note which recurs again and again in the First Epistle of John, and which is stated in our text: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

Saving faith in Jesus Christ was the heart of John's message as it was of all the New Testament. Unless the Christian life begins with that it does not begin. The uniqueness of Christ's place as the Son of God, the fact that God's love manifested itself in the giving of his Son, the good news that the "blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin",—these are truths essential to his writing and the presupposition of all his exhortations. A decisive act of faith is essential to the righteousness of life which is emphasized throughout John's epistle, and to the abiding work of love.

The literal translation of the Greek phrase used here is not "believe *in* the name" but believe the name" of his Son Jesus Christ. Dr. B.F. Westcott says that it is equivalent to "believe as true the message which

the name conveys". The full title "His Son Jesus Christ" is itself a compressed creed. In the word, Son, we find suggested both the Deity of our Lord and the love of God the Father. In the name, Jesus, we are reminded of the perfect humanity of the Master. In the title, Christ, we find implicit the divine mission for which he was appointed and the nature of his atoning work. It is a title which finds in Him both the fulfillment of the past and the promise of the future.

Here as always, the concept of faith set forth is not one of intellectual acceptance alone but also of vital commitment. The salvation offered to man in the New Testament is the gift of God. Justification is by faith and by faith alone. The desire of the Christian is to "be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith". At the same time, the New Testament knows nothing of faith divorced from life. Dr. Charles Hodge has suggested that we may understand the word "believe" more accurately if we write it, "be-live"—that is to base our life upon Christ as Lord and Saviour. If our lives give no evidence that he is at work in us, that fact is itself an indication that we do not truly believe.

It is a futile thing for a man to say to a doctor, "I believe in your ability to cure my disease, but I will not follow your prescription". It is idle for one to declare to a candidate for office, "I believe in you as a leader but I cannot go to the polls to vote". It is mockery for one to assert his belief in democracy and then to avoid the discharge of his duties as a citizen. So is it meaningless for a person to declare his faith in Christ and to disregard the precepts of the Master in his attitudes and his actions. Belief in Christ implies that we will love him. Because it issues in love for him, faith will inevitably lead, John says, to the keeping of his commandments. The commandment which he emphasizes here is that in which all other commandments concerning our fellow men are summed up—it is that we should love one another.

John's mind was turning to that upper room where only the eleven are left with their Lord. The shadow of the cross is upon Him. Only a little while ago he has girded himself with a towel, taken a basin and washed the disciples' feet. "A new commandment I give unto you", he says, "that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another".

What was there new about this commandment? The Old Testament had said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Yes, but there are occasions when we do not love ourselves very much, times when we are sick and ashamed of ourselves, and would be rid of our own personalities if we could. When Christ said, "As I have loved you" he made this a new commandment because he gave a completely new and different standard. The love of Christ—utterly pure, absolutely unselfish, determined to seek and to save which was lost, not counting the cost, willing to endure the cross, praying forgiveness for those who nailed him to the tree—that is our standard now. It is this new commandment of Christ that John is emphasizing.

New Testament scholars will not need to be reminded that the word which is here used for love is "Agape", not "Eros". This word describes a love which is an expression of character, determined by will and not a thing of spontaneous emotion. In this sense 'love' is the willing communication to others of that which we have and are; and the exact opposite of that passion which is the desire of personal appropriation. We cannot always direct our emotions; we are not equally attracted to all men, but we can assuredly will that which is good for all men; we can unstintingly give of ourselves for their welfare.

How much we need to heed this command in the church today, and how much the world needs to see this kind of love in us! Tertullian reports the people of his day as saying in wonder: "Behold how these Christians love one another . . . for they are even prepared to die for one another". Men have not been speaking thus about Christians in our day. Sadly enough, they have had little occasion to do so. We rejoice that the days of denominational strife and enmity have so largely passed; yet there is still need for improvement in the relationships between denominations. The Churches need increasingly to see themselves not in the competitive relationships of the business world, but as members of the same family; as cooperating to win the world and not competing to win the few in one community while multitudes elsewhere go unreached. We must learn to love and understand one another so well that we can present a common front to the world. The differences among us should increasingly be those of organization only, as we plan and work together in affection, in trust, and in a common loyalty to Christ.

Our primary responsibility here is for conditions within our own

Church. We have been passing through days of controversy and debate. Great issues have divided us, and still there are many points on which we are not agreed. In loyalty to conscience and to duty we must bear our witness to truth, as God gives us to see the truth. When differences arise, however, we need to remember the limitations of our own wisdom, and to respect the motives of those who, with equal sincerity, are constrained to take a different view. It is very easy in our debates for tempers to become strained; for resentment to be aroused; for pride and a determination to carry the day for our side to displace charity and good will. "Little children, love one another". "Put on therefore as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."

The spirit which is needed in our Church courts is needed also in local churches. Sadly enough, there is never a year that does not find some congregations divided within themselves by differences between good men. Party is set against party, one individual is alienated from another, and bitterness prevails. Church quarrels are always a reproach to the name which we bear and a hindrance to the work of Christ. Let us remember that "love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil".

In the spirit of love must be found also the solution of our social problems. Our section, and to some extent our Church, is torn today by the question of racial relationships. It is not likely that we shall soon agree on all of the steps which must be taken. On one point we can agree. No policy can be right which is not based upon love and upon an honest desire for the good of our brethren—black or white.

The man of any race who accepts Christ is a child of God and the brother of every believer. No policy or attitude based upon hatred, scorn, a desire to humiliate, or a willingness to keep any other person from attaining his fullest development can be in accord with the mind of Christ. As Christians, we need to be much in prayer that we may understand the will of God and that we may be given the grace to obey. "This is the message which we heard from the beginning, that we could love one another If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

In love is the motive which will lead us to a new concern, for the needs of the suffering, the sorrowful and the needy about us. We have not begun to do what we should for the widows, the fatherless, the displaced, the needy and the suffering of the world.

In love, too, is the only power which can send us out in a great forward movement of Evangelism and Missions both at home and abroad. It is true that the new commandment of Christ was directed especially to the relationship between those who were already his servants. By implication, however, it deals with our obligation to all men. Christ died for all. In every individual we see a soul in need of Him: one, who, by his grace and through his redeeming power, is potentially a child of God. If true love is inconsistent with closing our hearts to the physical needs of men, how much less can it be reconciled with indifference to the spiritual state of those who are perishing because they have not the bread of life.

We rejoice in the rapid growth of our Church in recent years; we thank God for that which has been accomplished on our mission fields. At best, however, we have scarcely touched the fringe of that which is possible for us and demanded of us. We have not begun to labor as we ought, we have not in any real sense sacrificed for Christ, we have not understood what it is to love. We need to come again to the foot of the cross, to see the broken heart of God in Christ, to catch something of the passion of him who loved us and gave himself for us. In penitence and in devotion we are called to dedicate ourselves anew to the fulfillment of His Great Commission. Constrained by his love, forgetting our differences, united by his Spirit, we must move forward in the work to which he has called His people.

"And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Lord, we believe. Help Thou our unbelief. Lord, we do love. Teach us to love, in fulness and in truth!

A CALL TO CIVIL OBEDIENCE AND RACIAL GOOD WILL
THE ATLANTA MINISTERS' MANIFESTO

1957

The years which have followed the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court that segregation in public education is contrary to our Constitution have been a time of testing for the South. The fall of 1957 was a time of great agitation and of increasing bitterness in Georgia and in Atlanta. There was much talk in high political circles of closing the public schools rather than to see them desegregated. Various means were being taken to intimidate or to punish those who dared speak out for justice. Under the leadership of Dr. Herman L. Turner, then Pastor of the Covenant Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, a small group of ministers came together to discuss the crisis. Dr. Richards was appointed to frame a statement for publication and produced what was to become known as the Atlanta Ministers' Manifesto. This paper, with minor alterations, was signed by 80 Atlanta ministers—many others would have signed if time had permitted general solicitation—and appeared over their signatures on the front page of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Sunday, November 3, 1957. It was widely reported and generally applauded in the press of the nation. The Manifesto does not, and did not, pretend to be a full statement of what Christian Faith requires of us in racial relationships. Nevertheless, it set up a standard to which men of good will could rally, and marked a turning point toward racial justice in the South.

These are days of tremendous political and social tension throughout our entire world, but particularly in our nation and beloved Southland. The issues which we face are not simple, nor can they be resolved over night. Because the questions which confront us are in so many respects moral and spiritual as well as political, it is appropriate and necessary that men who occupy places of responsibility in the churches should not be silent concerning their convictions.

The signers of this statement are all ministers of the Gospel, but we speak also as citizens of Georgia and of the United States of America. We are all Southerners, either by birth or by choice, and speak as men who

love the South, who seek to understand its problems, and who are vitally concerned for its welfare. In preparing this statement we have acted as individuals, and represent no one but ourselves. At the same time we believe that the sentiments which we express are shared by a multitude of our fellow-citizens, who are deeply troubled by our present situation and who know that hatred, defiance and violence are not the answer to our problems, but who have been without a voice and have found no way to make their influence effective.

In presenting our views for the consideration of others we can only speak in a spirit of deep humility and of penitence for our own failures. We can not claim that the problem of racial relationships has been solved even in the churches which we serve, and we are conscious that our own example in the matter of brotherhood and neighborliness has been all too imperfect. We do not pretend to know all the answers. We are of one mind, however, in believing that Christian people have an especial responsibility for the solution of our racial problems and that if, as Christians, we sincerely seek to understand and apply the teachings of our Lord and Master we shall assuredly find the answer.

We do not believe that the South is more to blame for the difficulties which we face than are other areas of our nation. The presence of the Negro in America is the result of the infamous slave traffic—an evil for which the North was as much responsible as the South. We are also conscious that racial injustice and violence are not confined to our section and that racial problems have by no means been solved anywhere in our nation. Two wrongs, however, do not make a right. The failures of others are not a justification for our own shortcomings, nor can their unjust criticisms excuse us for a failure to do our duty in the sight of God. Our one concern must be to know and to do that which is right.

We believe that the difficulties before us have been greatly increased by extreme attitudes and statements on both sides. The use of the word "Integration" in connection with our schools and other areas of life has been unfortunate, since to many that term has become synonymous with amalgamation. We do not believe in amalgamation of the races, nor do we feel that it is favored by right thinking members of either race. We do believe that all Americans, whether black or white, have a right to the full privileges of first class citizenship. To suggest that a recognition of the rights of Negroes to the full privileges of American citizenship, and to such

necessary contacts as might follow would inevitably result in intermarriage is to cast as serious and unjustified an aspersion upon the White race as upon the Negro race. Believing as we do in the desirability of preserving the integrity of both races through the free choice of both, we would emphasize the following principles which we hold to be of basic importance for our thought and conduct:

1. Freedom of speech must at all costs be preserved. "Truth is mighty and will prevail." No minister, editor, teacher, state employee, business man or other citizen should be penalized for expressing himself freely, so long as he does so with due regard to the rights of others. Any position which can not stand upon its own merits and which can only be maintained by silencing all who hold contrary convictions, is a position which can not permanently endure.

2. As Americans and as Christians we have an obligation to obey the Law. This does not mean that all loyal citizens need approve the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court with reference to segregation in the public schools. Those who feel that this decision was in error have every right to work for an alteration in the decree, either through a further change in the Supreme Court's interpretation of the law, or through an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. It does mean that we have no right to defy the constituted authority in the government of our nation. Assuredly also it means that resorts to violence and to economic reprisals as a means to avoid the granting of legal rights to other citizens are never justified.

3. The Public School System must not be destroyed. It is an institution essential to the preservation and development of our democracy. To sacrifice that system in order to avoid obedience to the decree of the Supreme Court would be to inflict tremendous loss upon multitudes of children whose whole lives would be impoverished as a result of such action. It would also mean the economic, intellectual and cultural impoverishment of our section, and would be a blow to the welfare of our nation as a whole.

4. Hatred and scorn for those of another race, or for those who hold a position different from our own, can never be justified. It is only as we approach our problems in a spirit of mutual respect, of charity, and of good will that we can hope to understand one another, and to find the way to a cooperative solution of our problems. God is no respecter of persons. Every

human personality is precious in His sight. No policy which seeks to keep any man from developing fully every capacity of body, mind, and spirit can be justified in the light of Scripture. This is the message of the Hebrew prophets as it is of Christ and His disciples. We shall solve our difficulties when we learn to walk in obedience to the Golden Rule: "Therefore, all things, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets."

5. Communication between responsible leaders of the races must be maintained. One of the tragedies of our present situation is found in the fact that there is so little real discussion of the issues except within the separate racial groups. Under such circumstances it is inevitable that misunderstandings will continue and that suspicion and distrust will be encouraged. One of the reasons that extreme measures have been so often proposed or adopted by groups within both races is found in the fact that those who are most concerned have seldom faced the issues in a situation where there could be a free exchange of ideas. We believe that a willingness on the part of white leaders to talk with leaders of the Negro race, and to understand what those leaders are really seeking for their people is necessary and desirable. An expressed willingness on our part to recognize their needs, and to see that they are granted their full rights as American citizens, might well lead to a cooperative approach to the problem which would provide equal rights and yet maintain the integrity of both races upon a basis of mutual esteem and of free choice rather than of force.

6. Our difficulties cannot be solved in our own strength or in human wisdom. It is appropriate, therefore, that we approach our task in a spirit of humility, of penitence, and of prayer. It is necessary that we pray earnestly and consistently that God will give us wisdom to understand His will; that He will grant us the courage and faith to follow the guidance of His Spirit.

To such prayer and obedience we would dedicate ourselves and summon all men of good will.

1957

The offering of a prayer before the playing of the Star Spangled Banner at many athletic contests is a practice which seemed to arise spontaneously out of a sense of national and individual need during World War II. In a good many localities it has been continued since that time.

The invocation printed here was delivered by Dr. Richards, a keenly interested follower of all athletic sports, before a football game played between Georgia Tech and Auburn on Grant Field, Atlanta, Georgia, October 20, 1957.

O God, our heavenly father; We thank Thee today for the beauty round about us; for strong young men, for courageous spirits, and for the love of play. We pray thy blessing now upon the members of these teams and upon the institutions which they represent. Whether in victory or in defeat teach us all the lessons of fair play, of sportsmanship, and of loyalty to causes greater than ourselves. May thy blessing abide upon our country, that increasingly ours may be a nation exalted by righteousness; that America may be a force for freedom, for justice, for mercy and for peace among all nations. Make us faithful as individuals in the performance of all the duties of free citizens, and use us for the accomplishment of thy purposes, we pray in Christ's name, Amen.

1958

Written as an interpretation of Twentieth Century History, this article appeared in the July, 1958 issue of THEOLOGY TODAY and is reprinted from that publication.

The interpretation of history is a perilous undertaking at best. This is particularly true when an attempt is made to deal with contemporary events and movements. For the most part one needs a long perspective in order to see human affairs in true proportions and to understand the significance of what he sees.

Time seems to have a way of being moral in its ultimate decisions. "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." It was this fact, written large in the records of antiquity, which led Mommsen to declare that "God makes a Bible out of history," and J.A. Froude to assert that "history is a voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong." Even in the events of our own day we can sometimes see clearly the retribution which evil brings upon itself. For a time, however, the unscrupulous person or nation frequently appears to possess a real advantage, and we find ourselves perplexed and baffled that truth should so continually be upon the scaffold and that wrong should so often occupy the throne.

Mankind has seldom known anything but tempestuous seas, and every age is a time of crisis. With due regard for that fact, it is still hard to escape the conviction that the world has scarcely known any period of more stupendous events or of greater peril than our own time. Some eight years ago, Gerald Johnson published a suggestive commentary on the first half of the Twentieth Century under the striking title, *Incredible Tale*. The book itself dealt with the political education of the average American citizen through the events of our times, and particularly through the careers and the influence of four leaders: Woodrow Wilson, Nikolai Lenin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Josef Stalin. The idea of its title was suggested by some words of Aeschines in 330 B.C.—"What is there in the list of strange and unexpected events that has not occurred in our time? Our lives have transcended the limits of humanity; we are born to serve as a theme of incredible tales to posterity." Mr. Johnson's treatment of his

theme makes highly interesting and stimulating reading, but his choice of this phrase as a description of our own history since 1900 seems little less than a stroke of genius.

The record of man's scientific progress and material achievement in these fifty-eight years needs no large treatment here. Many inventions which were in their infancy or still unborn at the beginning of our century, have today become so commonplace as to be a matter of course. The automobile and the airplane, the use of electric power for countless purposes, the telephone, the radio, and television have transformed the lives of millions. Nuclear fission, so little understood by most of us, has come to be accepted as though it were a simple matter and the launching of earth satellites has now become routine.

Yet, unbelievable as man's material achievements have been, the fact of his inability to use them aright remains even more amazing. This being who has harnessed the forces of the universe for his own use has made no apparent progress toward controlling his own passions or conquering himself. This person who has made such progress toward the conquest of disease, and who so prolongs man's life, knows no better how to live than did his forebears. This creature who has so nearly annihilated time and space has not been able to increase his own spiritual stature, or to narrow the moral abyss between himself and God.

Nowhere, perhaps, is the record of man's failures more glaringly plain than in the economic, social, and political history of our times. Here the tale is one of appalling blindness, of incredible blunders, of awful tragedy brought by man upon himself—and of an apparent inability to learn from and profit by his own mistakes. It was in a mood of blithe optimism that Western man entered upon this twentieth century. Progress, it seemed, was the inevitable order of things. Through some evolutionary process, as a result of some force resident within his own breast, man was destined to move onward and upward to ever higher achievements and standards. The fact that we had come so far was evidence enough that our journey would continue smoothly. It was a time in which not a few thinkers held that never again would the great nations of the world resort to war.

Such complacency was not destined to endure. During the summer of 1914 the bubble burst, and the very nations in which Western civilization had attained its highest levels found themselves engulfed in bloodshed. In 1917 the United States entered the conflict under the idealis-

tic leadership of Woodrow Wilson. Many of us remember still the phrases in which he stated for the nation the purposes of our warfare. We were fighting "a war to end war", we were fighting to "make the world safe for democracy." So we believed, and for these ends men sacrificed and died. Indeed it is possible that if his country had been prepared to follow Wilson into the League of Nations, and to make of it a strong and working organization, these goals might in a measure have been attained. But, America did not enter the League. The end of the conflict left democracy less safe than it had been before and the seed of future wars had been scattered upon fertile soil.

There followed the comparatively gay and prosperous years of the nineteen twenties, when men dreamed that they had returned to what President Harding called "Normalcy." The War must have been only an unfortunate interlude. A tragic mistake had occurred, but it was, assuredly, only a temporary interruption in the true scheme of things. We could now forget that unhappy experience, resume our steady progress, and all would be well. Day by day and in every way we were becoming richer, more comfortable, and, therefore, better men.

But again we were interrupted. In the autumn of 1929 something happened on Wall Street. The crash of the stock market marked the beginning of a national collapse of confidence, and America entered the period of the great depression. Today, even in a time of recession, it is hard to think oneself back into those years—with seventeen million men in the United States looking in vain for work, industry stagnant, banks closed or closing, multitudes living on the verge of despair. This condition, moreover, was not confined to one nation, but was part of a world situation which had its effect in most portions of the globe.

In 1933 the bottom of the long decline was reached and conditions began slowly to improve. At about the same time, however, our newspapers began to carry more and more frequently an, at first, unfamiliar name. On March 5, 1933, a strange little man called Adolph Hitler received full power over the destinies of Germany by action of the Reichstag. Today his whole career seems almost utterly unbelievable. He had begun life in obscurity, he had gone through one war as a nameless soldier among millions of his fellows; his early attempts at leadership had ended in almost ludicrous failure. Yet within his breast there burned some strange fire of genius and madness. Confined to prison he wrote out a program for

himself and for his nation, which he published under the title *Mein Kampf*, for all the world to read. Then step by step he carried out his plan. The great nations, who might have stopped this man in the beginning by one firm action, perhaps without the shedding of a drop of blood, stood aside and watched his steady progress to power. Indeed there were some who wished him well, believing that in a stronger Germany the West would find a new bulwark against Russia.

In 1939 Hitler was ready. At the end of that summer, not twenty-one years after the Armistice of World War I, tragedy struck afresh, and mankind was again engaged in war—this time more terrible than that which had preceded it. In 1941 the United States became involved through Pearl Harbor. Once again this nation fought for great ideals—The Four Freedoms! Perhaps most men would find it hard to name them today: Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion.

We fought the War through to what seemed a complete victory, to the unconditional surrender we had demanded, but which of the freedoms did we win? Freedom from Want—in a world where millions of men have died of starvation since the guns fell silent, and millions today scarcely know what it is to be satisfied with food? Freedom from Fear? Has there ever been a time when so many men lived in the shadow of dread as today? Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Religion? The very concepts are utterly rejected by Communism, and even in our own land these freedoms are perhaps by no means so safe as we would like to think. Instead of securing these privileges for all men in our day, we have seen them taken away from millions in China and in the so-called satellite countries, by forces which would deny them to the world if permitted to do so.

Another incredible facet of the story is found in the new light it has thrown upon human nature—upon man's capacity for evil. A civilization which prided itself upon the distance it had traveled from barbarism and savagery has suddenly discovered that, if it has progressed at all, it has been in the direction of even greater cruelty. The slaughter of the Jews under Hitler, the horrors of Dachau, and Buchenwald, the deliberate liquidation of millions of men in Russia, the misery of the concentration camps, and the fate of men who sought for freedom in Hungary are grim reminders of the reality of things as they are. Nor can we congratulate ourselves that we are guiltless of similar tendencies and actions. One of the amazing

revelations of the war was found in the ease with which the Allies accepted and employed the practice of obliteration bombing. Men whose moral sensibilities had professedly been shocked by some of the Old Testament stories of Israelitish warfare, swiftly adopted the same practices, with the heightened efficiency of modern weapons, loosing death and destruction upon innocent children, the helpless aged, and non-combatant women alike, in a slaughter the like of which mankind had not known in centuries. The bomb which fell on Hiroshima was different in power and destructiveness, but not in moral intent, from thousands which rained on European cities. All this we accepted as a matter of course, with few twinges of conscience, and apparently without pausing to reflect on the revolutionary change which has taken place in our concepts of what is permissible for civilized—not to say Christian—men.

The record of the years since 1945 would have been almost equally unbelievable if predicted in advance. Within a brief span of time after hostilities ended, we had come to count and to fear as enemies two great nations which we had hailed as gallant allies during World War II—Russia and China. At the same time, we began almost feverishly to woo as allies the very nations against which we had fought so bitterly—Germany, Italy and Japan. Thus began and continues the period which we call the “Cold War”—a period of tension, of hostility, of suspicion, and of an incredibly costly race to produce ever more deadly weapons and more effective means of delivering them upon other nations. Meanwhile we have fought in Korea another war, which in any other period would be accounted a major conflict, and we face continually the possibility that at some other point hostilities will break out which cannot be locally contained and which will result in tragedy for all the world.

The very nature of the threat posed by Communism is itself so paradoxical that one could hardly have dreamed it possible. Here is a system which bases itself upon the denial of God, yet which for many of its followers has come to constitute a religion of power. It inspires its followers with a devotion and a demonstrated readiness to sacrifice which often make our declarations of willingness to follow Christ seem a hollow mockery. It scoffs at the idea of moral law but continually condemns us for failure to live up to our own standards, and builds a case against us before the conscience of mankind on the basis of our own professions. It seizes upon ideals and slogans which should be those of Christians and uses

them for its own ends, claiming to be the only power that seeks for peace, that would establish racial justice, that will remove want, and that will provide opportunity for the masses. The fact that Christian ideals have tremendous power, even when falsely used, is attested by the success of Communism in winning the support of multitudes who will no longer be content with the status of former years.

Yes, it is an "incredible tale," is it not? Who could have imagined it in advance, and who can predict its ending? Almost it seems to be a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." On the contrary, it has a significance so clear that "even a wayfaring man, though a fool", should be able to understand. It signifies the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of our race. It makes plain, as does the record of no other period in history, the fact that man left to his own devices is doomed. Unless man can acquire a wisdom greater than his own, unless he can find a source of power sufficient to transform his nature, inevitable disaster awaits our race.

In the emergence of this fact our time presents the Christian forces of the world with a fresh challenge and a supreme opportunity. The men of our day are no longer either complacent or optimistic. The futility of war as a means to settling our problems is all too clearly indicated by our experience. The very science which had been man's pride and confidence now threatens to destroy him. Events have constrained him to peer into the secret places of his own soul, and what he has seen there fills him not with hope, but with horror. It is almost certainly this fact which accounts for the altered mood of multitudes toward the Church that prevails so widely today; for a new and wistful attitude toward religion which holds out at least the possibility of a real spiritual awakening.

The situation is one for which no half-way Christianity can suffice. Our faith must challenge its followers to a dedication greater than that of Communists; to a consistency of life which the world cannot ignore; to a missionary effort such as the Church has not known since the early centuries of our era; and to a fresh proclamation of the lordship of him who alone is able to transform the lives of individuals and of nations. Once again Christians must be ready to out-live, to out-think, and, if need be, to out-die the world. In such a development lies the only real hope of mankind. This, we believe, is the lesson of history in the Twentieth Century.

1963

This address was delivered to the Alumni Association of Columbia Theological Seminary at a meeting held on November 4, 1963. In a sense it constituted a "tract for the times", dealing as it did with the needs and with some of the pressing problems of the early '60's. In treating those problems, however, the speaker sought also to voice some of his deepest convictions concerning the nature of the Gospel and the essential task of the Church and its ministers.

There has been an amazing change of mood within Christendom in recent years.

Less than a decade ago a spirit of optimism and assurance permeated the life of the Church in America. A great interest in religion seemed to be abroad in the land. Never had religious books and articles been more in demand. Newspapers were devoting a great deal more attention to stories of ecclesiastical events and movements than at any time in our century, and most of the treatment given was favorable. Relief was popular. Church membership was growing steadily, both in numbers and in proportion to the total population of our country. The supply of candidates for the ministry was at a record high, and new churches were being erected all across our land. It seemed as if we might be on the verge of a great religious revival.

Something has happened to the Church. In many quarters today we find a spirit of discouragement and defeatism. Growth continues but at a slower rate. We are constantly reminded that Christianity is beoming more rather than less of a minority movement in the midst of the world's population explosion. The Church and its ministry are increasingly the object of criticism in the press, the literature and the conversation of our day. There is bewilderment and uncertainty where formerly there was confidence. It is not so easy to arouse enthusiasm, to secure new members, or to sound the advance as it was.

Obviously the optimism which prevailed a few years ago was not well grounded, nor was a great triumph for the Church at hand. By the same token, there is no reason for dismay at present. The task before us

is difficult but, in reality, it has never been otherwise. It is well that we should examine the situation before us with realism, and that we should understand the real nature of our tasks. It is neither necessary nor right that we should be depressed.

One of the accusations constantly made against the Church and the ministry today is that our message lacks relevance; perhaps the accusation is just in its application to much of our preaching. In truth, however, the Gospel is eternally relevant. It is as applicable and as necessary now as it ever was, and as it always will be. It is a Word of the Lord that teaches men how to live and how to die. That Word is our need—and the need of all men. We must learn how to preach it effectively in the troubled and chaotic society of the late Twentieth Century.

Ours is a Gospel which teaches men how to live. It has its application to all of the problems of thought and of conduct today. Assuredly it has its application to the problem which is never far from our minds in these times—that of racial relationships. Here is an acid test of our Christianity.

Quite obviously the problems which confront us in this matter are many and complex. Anyone who claims to have all the answers does not really understand the facts of the situation. Nevertheless, in our willingness and our desire to solve this problem in the Mind of Christ is to be found a real indication as to the nature of our faith.

The minister in our section is faced with a difficult task as he seeks to deal with this matter. Emotions are high and tempers are short. Many people are unwilling to listen to any discussion of the subject which does not agree with their own ideas. What shall the minister do and say? The question is not easy to answer, and many of the criticisms leveled at us for our silence are unfair. It would be a fairly simple thing if one had only his own popularity or his own position to consider. I believe that most of our ministers are willing to suffer if need be. But love for the truth must be combined with love for one's people and with the responsibilities of a pastor. How far should one go in interposing a barrier between himself and his people, so that there is no longer the possibility of ministering to the flock for which one is made responsible? What should one do when loyalty to what one most surely believes will mean splitting a congregation? What if preaching the truth dries up the source of our benevolent giving and impoverishes the total program of the church?

There is no simple answer. My heart goes out to you who are constantly living with this issue. Certainly we must retain the love and the confidence of our people, if possible. Otherwise we cannot hope to serve adequately as pastors. By all means we must avoid the rending of a congregation when we can find proper ways to do so. At the same time our ordination vow requires us "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and the peace of the Church." Purity is necessary to any peace that is real. There are things even worse for a congregation than controversy and division. It can be true for a congregation and for the Church as a whole, as it is for the minister, that "he that saveth his life shall lose it".

One point would seem to be basic. Whatever discrimination is practiced elsewhere, we have no right to shut any man out of the Church and away from the preaching of the Gospel. The teaching of Scripture is clear. "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons", writes James, the Brother of our Lord, "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth gay clothing, and say to him sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" It seems not to have occurred to James that, beyond being assigned to a low place, a man might even be barred entirely from the congregation of God's people. Is the color of a man's skin any better basis for such action in the sight of God than the nature of his clothing?

Yet, for so simple a thing as holding that every one who comes to God's house should be admitted, many of our ministers—and some of you—are suffering today. For this cause men, and sometimes their families, suffer persecution. May God pity us!

There are three concerns that ought to move us deeply in this matter. One of them is concern for freedom of the pulpit—for the right to declare the Word of God according to conscience. We had better stand by our brethren in their struggles, whether we agree with them or not. If our brother's freedom to preach the truth as he understands it at one point is taken away, our freedom to preach some other truth may be gone tomorrow. If a congregation can silence a man on one point of conscience, how

can it ever be confident that he will be faithful in proclaiming the Word of God in any other area. Peace that is secured in this way is purchased at too high a price. Both sessions and presbyteries would do well to ponder this fact.

A second concern should be to assert the fact that there is no area of the believer's life which must not be brought into subjection to Christ. On the detailed applications of Christ's teachings good and faithful men may differ. We have no infallible interpreter of Scripture. Neither the minister nor the Church can claim to have all wisdom, nor can we bind the consciences of men by our own dictates. One thing, however, we can declare with certainty. The Christian must earnestly seek to know and to do the will of Christ in every sphere of life. Neither personal desires, nor prejudice, nor tradition nor experience can be chosen in preference to Him. We must seek to base our racial practices, as our conduct in all other matters, upon the revealed Will of our risen Lord. With Luther we must say: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God."

A third concern must be that in all of our efforts to know and to do the right the spirit of love shall prevail. We must preach the truth as God gives us to see it, but we must preach it in love. Congregations similarly should hear the preaching in love. Anger, name calling and bitterness have no place in the Church. We must strive to understand those with whom we differ, avoiding pride in our own positions. None of us is fully Christian; we are only seeking to become so. Scorn and ill-will toward those with whom we disagree will not advance our cause. Let us pray with and for one another, that together we may more perfectly understand and do the will of Christ. Let us love one another.

But there are other pressing issues which confront us in teaching ourselves and others how to live. There is the matter of purity and chastity. Sexual license is increasingly prevalent in our world. Impurity of thought, of speech and of action is encouraged by the literature, the movies, and the amusements of our day. Seldom, if ever in history has there been such an outpouring of filth and such an effort to destroy standards of sexual morality as now. We need to combat the evil of impurity with all the power we possess—beginning with ourselves. In the atmosphere of our day no man is safe. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

We can only mention some of the other areas which demand our prayerful thought and our preaching. There is the question of honesty in

all our personal and our business relationships. There is the need for teaching as to temperance, or Christian abstinence in a day when the use of alcohol is wrecking lives and destroying homes. There is the respectable but deadly sin of covetousness. The temptation to covetousness is one of the most insidious to confront both our people and ourselves. It can make us soft and unwilling to sacrifice. It can rob us of all spiritual power.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has much to say about all these matters. It is not its irrelevance but its everlasting relevance which troubles our souls.

And this Word which teaches men how to live contains the only real answer as to how they can die. This also is an aspect of the truth which much of our preaching has neglected. One wonders sometimes whether the church really believes its own message on the subject. Certainly we have not declared it with the urgency and the conviction which the issue demands.

The world does not like the subject of death. Men put it out of their thoughts so far as possible. If they face it at all it is seldom in the light of God's Word. Like Omar Khayyam they assume that God's "a good fellow and 'twill all be well." When death intrudes it is popular to exalt the merits of the person gone and to declare that one so decent must assuredly have entered into a better life. Popular philosophy in the matter is expressed in the inscription over the entrance to a famous American cemetery—"Dedicated to Belief in a Happy Immortality." This soft and easy philosophy of death is based upon nothing whatever but wishful thinking and an unwillingness to face the ugly reality of sin.

Does the Church believe its own message? Do we know that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"? Do we really accept the teachings of Christ as to the eternal consequences of sin? Do we heed the words of Him who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"?

If there is another way, if all is really well with those who forget God and live as they please, then we need not be overly concerned about the state of the Church or of the world. In this case our faith may be a pleasant luxury, but it is not essential. There is no reason for us to be any more concerned about evangelism and missions than we have been. We can be comfortable in assuming that the world is right and that it does not really matter too much how we live or die.

Brethren, we must re-examine our convictions. We must recapture the sense of urgency which our Lord teaches. In a world of dying men we must be concerned that so many know nothing of him who is the Resurrection and the Life. We must heed anew the Great Commission of our Lord. We must learn to preach again the fact that "the wages of sin is death" but that "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

In this message the Gospel is supremely relevant. There are other teachers who have indicated fairly well the way to live. There is only one who can show them how to die. There is no other way than Christ.

Let us not be discouraged, or become weary in well doing. The task of the ministry has never been easy. It will not be easier tomorrow. But God is still upon the throne.

It is popular in many quarters to speak of ours as a "Post-Protestant" and indeed as a "Post-Christian World". I dare to assert that it is not so. On the contrary it is a "Pre-Christian World."

The world has never been Christian. It never will be fully Christian until our Lord returns to reign. But men are in His hands. The future is as bright as His promises. We may fail but He will not. His is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory. His Will shall be done, despite the folly and the rebellion of men and of devils.

In this assurance let us dedicate ourselves afresh to the task that is forever relevant and compelling. In His strength let us faithfully proclaim His Word for this life—and for the life to come.

1964

In August, 1964, Dr. Richards was one of several ministers invited to preach at Montreat, N.C. in a three day program which had as its prevailing theme the prayer, "Come Creator Spirit." His contribution to that program dealt with the Holy Spirit in his relationship to the life and unity of the Universal Church.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost", and "the holy Catholic Church." It is surely no accident that these phrases come together in the Apostles' Creed. Apart from the Holy Spirit there would be no Christian Church. The third person of the Godhead constituted the church, formed it and gave it being. Pentecost was its birthday—an event in the Christian year to which we give all too little emphasis.

The Spirit came at Pentecost upon the praying company of the disciples. Campbell Morgan reminds us that "when the Spirit came upon the waiting group of disciples he changed them from an aggregation of units into one corporate whole, the Church of the Living God."

At Pentecost, as Dr. J.B. Green has written, "the church became an organism and an organ. It afterwards became an organization. The church became an organism, that is a living, growing thing like a human body or a tree. The church became an organ—that is an instrument of the Spirit of God. As the Son needed a physical body through which to work—through which to obey, suffer, die and rise again, so the Spirit needed a body through which to witness. At Pentecost he prepared Himself a body. He became incorporated. We speak of the incarnation of the Son. We may well think of the transaction at Pentecost as the incorporation of the Spirit. The Church is the body He formed, He indwells, resides in."

"The Spirit is the principle of its life, the bond of its unity; the spring of its vitality and vigor, the source of its character, wisdom and ministry."

The Book which we know as The Acts of the Apostles may well be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit creates the Church, He fills the hearts of believers, He appoints leaders, He directs them in their work. He turns the apostles from apparently promising fields of witness

and leads them to others. He guides in their deliberations and inspires their pronouncements. He empowers them in their work, He prepares the way for them in the hearts of men. Restudy this book to see for yourself how constantly the Holy Spirit appears in its pages.

How could the church so constituted and directed be anything else than holy? How could the organism or organization which He formed be anything else than what it was—a catholic or universal church. The divisions in the church have not been the work of the Spirit; rather have they come about when believers ceased to follow His guidance.

The fragmentation of the church in recent centuries has often been called “the scandal of Christianity”—and so it is. That there are many members of the body of Christ and that these differ in function is a truth taught in the New Testament itself. That these members should be at war with one another, or that one member should consider itself the whole body, is utterly at variance with the will of God there revealed. “Saints by profession” declares the Westminster Confession, “are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities and necessities.”

It is a well recognized fact that the Reformers did not set out to divide the Church. On the contrary it was their desire to purify and to renew that body. John Calvin has been called the most ecumenical figure of the Reformation Era. For him the true church was to be found “wherever we find the Word of God purely preached and heard and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ.” He emphasized moreover the obligation of all Christians “to cultivate the communion of the Universal visible church.” “As there is but one head of the faithful”, said he, “so they ought all to be united in one body, thus there are not several churches, but only one which is extended throughout all the world.” His spirit is clearly shown by his statement that he would be willing to cross seven seas if by so doing he could promote the unity of believers. It was his plea that Christians should regard one another with “judgments of charity.”

In the seventeenth century those sons of Calvin, Comenius the Czech, and Baxter the Englishman were ardent advocates of Christian unity.

It is one of the glories of the Westminster Standards that they so clearly emphasize the true nature of the church. It is not Presbyterianism which they glorify but Christianity. One cannot say this better than does our Confession of Faith: "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that, have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

"The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the house and family of God." "Which communion (in worship and mutual helpfulness) as God offereth opportunity is to be extended to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." Could there be a more decisive testimony to what it means in a practical sense to belong to the Holy Catholic Church or a more articulate call to intercommunion?

The Confession declares that particular churches are members of the universal church. It points out that none of these is free of error, and recognizes that some have so degenerated as to become apparently no churches of Christ. Nevertheless its emphasis is upon the reality of one true and universal church, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head. The spirit of that Confession has continued to be characteristic of Presbyterians at their best. It has shaped, and pray God will continue to shape, the attitude and the policies of our own denomination.

Perhaps the most distinctive and significant movement within Christendom in this Twentieth Century has been that toward a greater unity within Christendom. At a time when war and strife have been let loose on the earth; when bitterness and hatred are rife; when civilization itself is threatened; there has been a yearning manifest among Christians for a new unity. Who shall say that this development is not of the Spirit.

This movement, which we call "Ecumenical", has made itself known in many ways. It has led to conferences within Protestantism on Missions, on Faith and Order, and on the Nature and Mission of the Church. It has led to cooperation among denominations in cities, states and nations. Its results have been seen in the organization of church councils at city, state and national levels and, in later years, of a World Council of Churches which has included Greek Orthodox as well as Protestant

groups. It has been the inner compelling urge for union of some denominations and for constant negotiations looking to other and to broader unions.

Within recent years under Pope John and his successor the movement has become a force within the life of Roman Catholicism as well. The recent Ecumenical Council of that church has been abundantly publicized. It is far too soon to assess the depth, or the ultimate results, of these latter stirrings. Roman Catholicism changes very slowly. It is difficult to imagine circumstances under which the church of the popes could ever work in close relationship with those who will not recognize the claims of the Vatican. Nevertheless, it is hard to mistake the fact that there is a new openmindedness, a greater charity, an unmistakable yearning for greater fellowship with other believers stirring the hearts and minds of our Roman brethren. With God all things are possible. A revolutionary change in the attitude and practices of Romanism are not beyond His power.

Who dares say that the Ecumenical movement is not the work of the Holy Spirit preparing his people for a new and better day? Who among us can fail to pray that it may be so?

Assuredly in our desire for unity we must not sacrifice truth. For this reason movement toward organic unions must almost of necessity proceed slowly. As Dr. Mackay has observed, "there is no future to any vague ecumenism whose goal is the minimum common ground of Christian agreement." At the same time we must recognize that all those who believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour are our brethren. We are one in Christ. As we come closer to Him, as we learn to know the truth as it is in Him, we cannot fail to come closer to one another—or to strive to make this fact manifest to the world.

To quote Dr. Mackay again: "True unity can be achieved in only one way. Each confession, after a process of rigorous self-examination, carried on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the triple light of the Word of God, the history of the church and the challenge of the hour, must strip itself of all accretions due to human pride and error. Let it then, responsive to the imperious voice of Jesus Christ, seek that unity which can be found only in mission."

Whatever else be true of our duty today, the commandment of Christ is that we love one another. The fruit of the Spirit is first of all love—followed by "joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." When we have that fruit in our lives we shall

inevitably be drawn closer to one another. When we approach our problems in that spirit we shall do so in greater hope of success.

It is for the lack of love that we are divided and warring with one another within our family circle. This is the tragedy of our own church today. If we truly long for the unity of Christendom we had better start where we are. Charity truly begins at home. There is a danger that we shall be so much concerned for union with other churches that we will fail to be concerned with disunity in our own midst. We can be so filled with a general love for all Christians that we will be bitter and unloving to the brother at our side whose emphasis is different from our own.

Narrowness is not limited to those whom we class as fundamentalists. Indeed the greatest intolerance is often found among those who count themselves liberals—and who are determined that all others shall be like them. I hear far more attacks made in certain church circles against Fundamentalists than I do against those who deny the Christian faith and oppose themselves to the church. Sometimes it almost seems true of both camps within our church that they would rather not have the Gospel preached at home or abroad than to have it preached by those with whom they differ. This is a far cry from the spirit of Paul—or of Christ. We have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of mankind.”

We cannot heal the universal strife by bringing strife and discord to it. Rather let us learn to love one another. Let us “be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” In so doing we shall attain a unity which will give us something to offer. In setting such an example we shall hasten the day when all Christians will be one.

The way is hard, the task is beyond human power, the work will not be fully done this side of the grave. But the duty laid upon us is unmistakable.

With all Christians we pray: “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” Note that we pray for this will to be done on *earth*; yet in Heaven there is but one church. We shall not there be conservatives or liberals, Protestants or Roman Catholics, but one people. Our great need, as taught by Christ himself, is that this should be true here and now.

The end will not be attained by our own wisdom and power. It can only come as the Spirit rules in our hearts and possesses his Church.

Even so, "Come Creator Spirit," that Christ may be glorified by the calling of his churches together—in love, in unity, in faith, in witness, and in life. As it shall be in Heaven, so may it increasingly be on earth. Amen.

1967

On August 14, 1967 the Atlanta Constitution carried on its front page a column from the pen of its distinguished Editor, the late Ralph McGill, which quoted the President of Columbia Seminary in apparent pessimism concerning the church and its ministers. Because he felt that this statements had been used out of context, and would be widely misinterpreted, Dr. Richards replied in a letter which appeared in the Constitution's "Pulse of the Public" Columns on August 23, 1967 setting forth some of the author's basic convictions. Both the article and the letter are reprinted here by permission of the Atlanta Constitution. Limitations of space prevented Dr. Richards from dealing at greater length with Mr. McGill's statements about the tragic results of the Church's failure to face the issue of racial justice. His own concern on this subject is expressed on other pages of this book. In the letter printed here he was primarily concerned to avoid misunderstanding and to express his faith in the future of the Christian Enterprise.

FEVER CHART OF EMOTIONS

There is a serious decline in the number of theological students in America. Fires of the old evangelical passions such as those that took John Wesley from the Anglican Church to use piles of beer barrels, slag heaps about coal mines, and other "pulpits" that would enable him to speak to the unwashed and unconverted masses of Britain have not puckered out. In some of the pentecostal groups there is still loud and fervent exhortation.

But as one Methodist pastor recently said, the churches seem too often to be more like filling stations set down on the most likely corners.

Dr. J. McDowell Richards, president of the prestigious Columbia Seminary (Presbyterian) noted the serious decline in the number of theological students. President Richards reports there is "talk" of consolidating the existing 140 seminaries in the United States to about 20 "religious centers."

"Those who aspire to be ministers are beginning to look at the irrelevancy of the church and see that in many cases those who try to make it relevant or speak out on civil rights or other controversial issues find themselves silenced or kicked out of the church. A young man headed for life as a pulpit minister must have more conviction of his profession than a man once did . . . The day of unquestioning faith and blind following of ministers is over."

UGLY! HOPEFUL!

Within recent weeks news stories have reported walkouts from Sunday sermons preached on the relevancy of the church's duty to the conditions that bring on riots and urban disturbances.

Mail to newspaper editors is like a fever chart. It goes up and down with emotions. There now are letters from Southerners gleefully greeting the riots because they are in "northern cities." Race prejudice and the regional provincialism of ministers come through in comments such as: "What are the Northern preachers doing about the race problem now that it is in their laps?" . . .

"My church is going to stay white . . . we don't want any of that jungle crowd coming to worship with us. . . ." (most of this type are from rural and suburban areas. But the open pleasure in "the North's" having riots was revealing.)

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Events should not be lost on "the church," of any individuals. The relatively small Black Power extremist groups have three major targets. They are "the church," the white man, and, equally, what they call the "bourgeois Negro," who, despite handicaps and deprivations, has made a place for himself.

MORE EXPECTED

It is essential to know that the problems of the slums and civil rights are separated, though related. Not many of the slum people have even heard of the civil rights acts and advances of 1964 and 1965. Their environment . . . their total environment . . . has been one of unrelenting ugliness, want and denial. There are about 16 million persons in poverty and another 26 million on the borders of poverty. And the number grows.

If this were not true there could not, and would not, be any Black Power extremists.

The church is not alone in withdrawal and lack of commitment. But, somehow, more is expected of it. That it remains largely segregated, that it fires or silences ministers for bringing the greatest social problem of the age to the pulpit poses a very large question mark. It also explains the shortage of theological students.

PULSE OF THE PUBLIC

I am honored to have some of my recent statements made the basis of comment in Ralph McGill's column for August 14. I am afraid, however, that I must have failed to make my real meaning clear. It seems to me that a person reading his article would quite probably conclude that my attitude toward the church was negative and defeatist. On the contrary, while seeking to be realistic in appraising its present weaknesses and failures, I sought in my statements as a whole to make clear the fact that I believe whole-heartedly in the church, and am confident as to its long-range future.

The fact that there has been a recent decline in the number of candidates for the ministry is real cause for concern. However, that decline has not been so large as may have been suggested by my words, actually amounting to less than 5 per cent for American Protestantism as a whole.

The proposal made by some leaders of the American Association of Theological Schools that the existing 140 theological seminaries be consolidated into 20 or 25 theological centers is in no way based upon the decline mentioned above. It looks rather to a raising of the level of all theological education by a pooling of resources to provide teaching, library and practical facilities far greater than the individual institutions could hope to afford.

In Atlanta, the Candler School of Theology, the Interdenominational Theological Center and Columbia Theological Seminary have already taken significant steps in this direction. A larger degree of cooperation is envisioned for the future.

It is true that it takes more conviction to enter the ministry today than formerly. This, in itself, is gain. If ever men entered this calling for prestige, or because it seemed to be a comfortable and easy field of service,

their motives were unworthy. Men who know the difficulties and who count the cost will make better ministers.

I did cite the frequently made charge that the church is irrelevant as discouraging to many. The charge is not baseless, for too much of our preaching has been irrelevant. This we must correct, but the church itself, with all its imperfections, still represents the real hope of the world. The message of the Old and New Testaments, which teaches men how to live and how to die, is and, when properly interpreted, will continue to be fully relevant to the life of modern man.

The relevance of this message may be obscured by poor preaching or by the failures of Christians to apply it in life, but it is not destroyed. Again it is not determined by the opinions of those who hear it. Jeremiah and Jesus were exceedingly relevant preachers. Their messages, however, did not win the approval of their contemporaries.

Out of the difficulties of the present, we believe that there will come a stronger, a more consistent and a more effective church. It will be a church vastly concerned with and involved in contemporary issues and needs as was its Master, but which, like him, will continue to declare that God reigns and that life is not merely a matter of the here and now.

For men who want both a hard and a rewarding task, the ministry never afforded a greater challenge than it does today.

J. McDowell Richards

1969

A firm believer in Missions, Dr. Richards sought consistently, in his pastorates and during his administration at Columbia Theological Seminary, to emphasize the missionary obligation of the church. For nine years he was a member of the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. In 1961 he went with Dr. Watson Street as an official representative of the Board to evaluate and report upon the situation in the Congo after the coming of independence. The sermon printed here was delivered before the student body and faculty of Columbia Seminary at a Chapel Service on May 23, 1969.

Matt. 28: 18-20 “All authority has been given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.”

These words constitute what we have known as the Great Commission. The name is not inappropriate, for certainly they do contain a commandment, a commission, of supreme importance. It is to be feared, however, that in facing the importance of missions which here is set forth, we have spoken too much of the task and too little of that which alone makes Christian Missions possible. We have faced the need for and the duty of World Missions, but have overlooked the authority and the power for this undertaking. No mistake could be more fatal in the end. As a matter of fact our text, as Dr. J.B. Green pointed out, contains a Dogmatic, an Ethic, and a Dynamic—A great belief, a great moral responsibility, and an all sufficient power. It is to all of these that we would give our attention today.

The Dogmatic set forth in the Great Commission is that of the Lordship of Christ. This is no mere teacher instructing his disciples. This

is not the Christ of Calvary, suffering for the sins of men. It is the Christ of the empty tomb; the Son of the Living God; the Lord of Glory. It is one who has both the authority to command and the power to enforce.

We do well to remember the meekness and the gentleness of Jesus. We need to study often the record of his earthly life and to meditate upon his teachings. We must never forget the meaning of his crucifixion. All of these are essential to our understanding of his nature and his mission. Yet if the story of Jesus had consisted only of these things there would have been no Gospel as we know it. It is because there is infinitely more to the record than this that you and I are here today and that millions like us worship in churches the world around.

If the words of Jesus on the cross had been his final message there would be nothing about this story which any one could have called Good News. If that had been the last scene in his well played career, then the drama of his life would remain mankind's supreme tragedy. Instead of providing a firm basis for hope and faith, his words would lead only to despair, and the denial of hope, and the negation of faith in a Father God. At Calvary we see sin in its true color and human nature at its worst. Here we see the finest and best that our race has known, rejected and destroyed by evil men yet men not more evil essentially than you and I. Worse than that, we see one who had utterly trusted God, who had served God with complete devotion, whose meat had been to do his Father's will, apparently forsaken at the end, so that in anguish he cries out to ask the reason why. Only the Resurrection of Christ has made Calvary glorious, for in it we find assurance that Jesus was what he claimed to be; that his teaching was with authority; that his faith in God was justified; that goodness and love shall yet triumph over evil.

It is not necessary to cite the evidence for the Resurrection again today. Suffice it to say that it is evidence of a nature which cannot be ignored, and upon which you and I need not hesitate to base our faith. I should like to say however, that the Great Commission is itself one of the greatest evidences of the Resurrection. Suppose Christ had not risen from the dead; suppose the disciples either lied about the empty tomb or became victims of a hallucination which made them believe he was alive when he was not—what kind of commission would they have imagined him as giving? Remember that these men were Jews who even at this time were asking when the Kingdom was to be restored to Israel. Is it conceivable

that in creating words to put into the mouth of their Master they would have made him speak of going to all the world or making disciples of all nations? The very opposite is true, for their hopes would at best have been confined to their own people. Even if they had desired to do so, would they have dared to undertake the evangelism of the world? Never, seemingly has there been a more "Impossible Dream." It is hard to explain the calm assurance and the world outlook of these words upon any other assumption than that they were indeed spoken by the risen Lord.

In this indirect way the Commission bears witness to the reality of the Resurrection. On the other hand, it becomes a divine imperative because of that event. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Here is set forth before us in the light of the empty tomb one of the supreme facts revealed in Scripture—the foundation truth of our faith. It is the fact of the Sovereignty of God; the assurance that the Kingdom and the Power, and the Glory are his alone, and that his will *shall* be done.

There are few truths which Christians need to have burned into their souls more than this today. We are living in a world troubled as perhaps never before in all of history. We have seen our dearest dreams destroyed and our loftiest ideals trailed in the dust. We have seen hatred and force repeatedly take the ascendancy and have watched wars come again and again despite the desperate efforts of men to escape. Today we see civilization threatened and face the possibility that the greatest achievements of our race may be wiped out. Beyond that, we see a rising tide of opposition to the Church and a determined attempt in many places to wipe Christian faith out of existence. We face these things, and are fearful and distressed; we should be distressed by them, but oh, my friends, the glory of the Christian Gospel is that we need not despair nor be afraid. "Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

During World War II a child in the baby cottage of Thornwell Orphanage had evidently listened much to the conversations of older people. Coming in one morning during the conflict and bringing the paper with its glaring headlines she laid it before her house mother and said, "Well mam, I guess so long as Hitler don't kill God and Jesus we're all right." How often we act as if man could destroy even the God whom we serve. We need to come back to the assurance of Scripture, to the simple faith

of that little child. As Dr. Hodge has well said; the "sovereignty of God is the ground of the peace and confidence of all his people. They rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that neither necessity, nor chance, nor the folly of men, nor the malice of Satan controls the sequence of events and all their issues. Infinite wisdom, love and power belong to Him, our great God and Saviour, into whose hands all power in heaven and earth has been committed."

This is not to say that God has willed the present state of affairs in the world. That state has been brought about because men have rebelled against Him, because they have turned their backs on the truth; because they have sinned against Him. Yet men have been able to do these things only because God permitted them freedom; they cannot go beyond the bounds which he has set. His plan will not be thwarted. "He maketh the wrath of men to praise him." He did that at the cross where in his wisdom, his power, and his love he made even sins defeat their own purpose and work the Salvation of men. In his own time and his own way he will overrule the folly of men in our day also, so that all things shall "work together for good to them that love God."

This is the power which has been given to Christ. By this authority he bids his disciples go and teach. It is the authority and the power of the sovereign God; an authority and a power which will not fail. Our Lord's words, you will notice, do not make him the source of that power. Here, as always, he ascribes the supreme place to the Father who has given him authority. Nevertheless, the power is in his hands. He is the reigning Christ. He has passed through the adversities of life, through the loneliness and the heartaches of his ministry; through the shame and the suffering of Calvary; through the glory of the Resurrection morn into the place of exaltation in heaven and in earth. He speaks now not in the notes of gentle persuasion but in the imperial tone of command. Because he has suffered humiliation "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Many enemies have not yet been overcome, there are still many to be destroyed, but the mark of their doom is upon them. In due time they too shall be brought into subjection to Christ. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

In giving this command to his followers, Christ, as always, went to the heart of the matter. He never argued for the existence of God; he simply recognized that supreme reality. He never questioned or defined the fact of sin; he faced the malady and pointed out the remedy. He did not debate the question as to whether other religions are good enough for their followers; he did not discuss the final state of those who never hear of him. He simply says: "Go . . . make disciples of all the nations." Bring them to know me; teach them to trust and follow me; preach to them the one who came that men might have life, and have it more abundantly."

That is enough. The disciple in his turn need not argue. He has only to obey him who is both Saviour and Lord. Missions cannot be an elective for the Church. It is central to her task and only as she gives herself to its accomplishment can she expect his presence and his blessing.

This then is the Dogmatic—the great imperative of our text. Let us pass quickly to the Ethic, the duty which there is set forth. There is not time enough for us to discuss it at length today—nor is there need, if only we have caught a glimpse of the reigning Christ. Having declared his authority as King, he proceeds to give his royal command. Therefore . . . Therefore, because I do have all power, "go and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."

"Faith without works is dead." Our Lord did not bid us simply to bring men to outward acceptance of Him. He did not suggest that when men had been baptized the task of his disciples would be done. One of the greatest weaknesses of our modern Christianity lies in the fact that we have been so anxious to get men into the Church and so little concerned about them after they got there. Jesus never gave encouragement to that kind of Christianity. "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you", he says. This takes in the Sermon on the Mount. It includes all the ethical and social teachings of the Master. It touches all of life. Jesus must reign over every part of man's life. He must truly be Lord of all. His Kingdom must embrace nations as well as individuals. He must be Lord in a man's home, in his business, in his social relationships, in his politics, in his Church—or he will not be Lord. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven," he says. Here is an aspect of his Ethic which touches every one of us in every part of life. We cannot teach others to observe what he has commanded save as we teach ourselves also. We

must crown him Lord of all in our own hearts and lives that we may seek to extend his Kingdom into all the world.

And then there is the Dynamic for our task. It is the dynamic which is implicit in Christ's declaration that all power has been given unto him; it is made explicit in the promise which follows his command, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Does the task that confronts us today seem to be overwhelming? Are there obstacles which apparently we cannot hope to overcome? How much worse then must the case have seemed to the little group to whom Christ gave the Commission. They faced a world which had crucified him, and which might well do the same to them. They possessed neither wealth nor learning nor influence, yet they were told to take the world for him. You cannot explain their daring to undertake such a task except in their assurance that Jesus Christ was Lord. You cannot explain the success of their efforts and the impact of the Christian Church upon the ancient world save by the fact that Christ was indeed with them, and in them, to give them strength for their task.

It has been true in the experience of God's people through the centuries that the presence of Christ has given power for every need. He is not a king far removed from the presence of his subjects. His throne is the heart of every true believer and his companionship is given to all who will take him at his word. When David Livingstone faced imminent peril of death at the hands of hostile tribesmen in Africa he wrote in his journal: "Felt much turmoil of spirit in prospect of having all my plans for the welfare of this great region and this teeming population knocked on the head by savages tomorrow. But I read that Jesus said: 'All power is given unto me . . . go ye therefore . . . and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age.' It is the word of a gentlemen of the most strict and sacred honor, so there's an end to it. I will not cross furtively tonight as I intended. Should such a man as I flee. Nay, verily, I shall take observations for latitude and longitude tonight, though they may be the last. I feel quite calm now, thank God."

It was that unseen presence which gave Livingstone strength for all his labors for Africa. It was that unseen Companion to whom he spoke last on earth before his spirit took its flight. When at last he passed away, the black men who came to his hut in the morning found his dead body in the position of prayer. Livingstone breathed his last breath upon his knees.

“Lo, I am with you always.”

“It is the word of a gentleman of the most strict and sacred honor.” It is the word of a king whose arm is not shortened and whose power will not fail. It is the promise of the sovereign God in and through His son. Let us so yield our lives to him today and always that we may claim the promise for ourselves, and that the power of his presence with us may make us faithful subjects, useful servants, flaming witnesses to the truth among all nations until they too shall sing:

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of All.”

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AS A
GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

1970

At the request of the Faculty, Dr. Richards was the principal speaker at the Convocation which opened the last academic year of his service as President of Columbia Theological Seminary. The address, which is printed here, was delivered in the Seminary Chapel on the evening of September 24, 1970.

What is a theological seminary? From an educational viewpoint it is a graduate professional school. That definition is not sufficient in itself to satisfy but it has implications which we may well explore for a little while tonight.

In the first place it suggests the nature of our task as viewed by the world of scholarship. A *graduate* school is not a place for beginners. It expects and demands maturity—if not in its beginning at least in its completion. This is no place for easy answers and for the presentation of predigested materials. The mastery of a field, the seeing of a subject as a whole, the facing of every hard and difficult question which may arise—these are essential to the graduate student who expects to perform his task aright.

A worthy graduate school does not accept or tolerate those who have no willingness to work. There is no royal or easy road to learning. Long hours and laborious effort are required of any one who expects to succeed. This should be not less but more true in a Christian than in a secular institution. As we begin a new year at Columbia Seminary let students and faculty members face this fact together, and determine that we shall act accordingly.

In the second place let us note the fact that this is a *professional* school. It does not seek to provide its graduates with an introduction to all knowledge and to general skills. On the contrary, it concerns itself with the mastery of a particular field of knowledge and with the acquiring of a specific skill or skills. The medical school devotes its attention to understanding the body and, to some extent at least, the mind of man. It combats every force which endangers or destroys physical and mental health. A school of law seeks ideally to prepare those who will know, understand and apply the legal precepts and principles on which the structure of our society

depends. By the same token, the theological seminary, existing as it does to serve the Church, has as its purpose the preparation of those who will know, understand, communicate and apply the truths by which that institution lives and for which it must not cease to stand.

In this connection, let us not forget the importance of the term, Theological, as applied to the education here. The Seminary does not exist in a vacuum. Its orientation is not primarily toward men. It is theo-centric, God-centered. Moreover the Theos, the God, with whom the Church and the Seminary are concerned, is not unknown, nor are his attributes left to speculation or imagination. The word Theological, as any good dictionary will attest, describes that which pertains to the Word of God. It deals with the God of Revelation—the God who has seen fit to communicate with man.

It is the Christian faith that God has revealed himself through prophets, seers and Apostles, but above all through his Son, Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament we find the record of that Revelation. There are various theories as to the nature of the Inspiration by which the Holy Spirit guided those who have conveyed his Word to us. With those theories you will find yourselves wrestling in days to come, and you will need to learn charity toward those with whom you differ. You will find no difference here, however, with reference to the fact of Revelation and the fact of Inspiration.

There are certain basic truths to which you will come back again and again in your study of the Bible. Here you will deal primarily with the fact and the Nature of God; with his holiness, his wisdom, and his power. You will have to do constantly with his holiness and with the demands this makes upon man; with his justice and what this requires; with his love and what this has done for us. In this supremely realistic book you will see man in all his degradation and sin, yet will not be allowed to forget the wonder of his origin, as one created in the image of God, or the potential glory of his future as one called to become a son of the heavenly Father. Through all of Scripture you will find running the crimson thread of God's redemptive purpose and sacrificial self-giving for his creature man—with all that this implies for our own conduct.

Knowledge of the Scriptures is basic to our theological training, but academic knowledge is not enough. The Scriptures were given that we might come to know God himself, and to find the life which God alone

can give. And here, wonder of wonders, we find that the God who was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

How shall we transmit that word to others? Not at all, we may be sure, until we have understood, pondered and appropriated it for ourselves. Fortunately its basic truths are so clear and simple that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. But there are mysteries here too profound for the wisest among men, and truths which we shall never exhaust. God has "yet more light waiting to break forth out of His Word" for those who earnestly and faithfully seek to find it.

But again it is not enough to have the knowledge for ourselves. We must learn how to communicate it to others. That is why we not only study Biblical, Historical and Doctrinal Theology but pursue all the courses in the Pastoral area as well. In these we seek to acquire the skills which, under the guidance and by the power of the Holy Spirit, may be used in bringing man to know Him who came that men might have life and have it more abundantly. That is why we need to know how men live today and what the forces are which make or wreck their lives. That is why we must study how to preach, how to teach, how to deal with human needs and problems, and how to carry on the program of the Church to the end that its mission may be fulfilled. Three years, four years, a lifetime are not enough for this.

Now, in conclusion, let me suggest that the word "professional" does not adequately describe the nature of Christian Theological Education. We need to be professional in the sense that we are not bungling amateurs, but men and women as fully equipped as possible for our task, both by knowledge and by skill. We must not be so in the sense that our work is done mechanically, as a means to earning a livelihood or of supplying our own needs. One does not, or should not, choose the ministry as a profession. Rather he is chosen for it, and called to it. He who is in the ministry for any other reason will not find fulfillment there, however successful he may be in winning the praise of men.

The first Christian theological seminary was conducted by Jesus of Nazareth. Its faculty of one was without reproach; in this it was different from any other seminary—before or since that time. The student body, on the other hand, was not too unlike that of other schools. It was made up of weak, fallible and blundering men. The disciples with one exception,

however, had two qualities in common. They followed Christ because they had recognized the authority of his call and because, imperfectly, but with increasing intensity, they loved and trusted Him. Because they did, he made of them—the eleven—a force which shook the world and changed the course of history.

Tonight he calls us again, students, teachers, staff members, families, to follow him. A theological course, if it is to have validity, is still a walk with Christ—a learning from Him. Only in faith, in love and in obedience can we find real meaning in the hard, and sometimes monotonous and wearisome, work which lies before us. Only in His strength can we face the difficulties and the challenge of our perilous times with assurance and with hope.

1972

On February 1, 1972, the Synods of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida met jointly in the Druid Hills Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. The purpose of this convention was to make plans for a new Synod "G" which, in accordance with the recommendation of the General Assembly, was to include all three bodies within its membership. Dr. Richards had been requested to deliver the closing message at this gathering and had prepared a formal address for the occasion. However, the meeting took somewhat longer than had been expected and when the time came for him to speak he sensed the fact that the Convention was weary and restless. For this reason he discarded most of the address which he had prepared, and delivered a brief extemporaneous message in which he endeavored to embody the central thrust of what he had intended to say. His remarks were recorded on tape and have been transcribed for the purpose of publication with only slight alterations. Under the circumstances, some of the sentences were not as Dr. Richards would have written them and a number of ideas are mentioned rather than developed. It seemed better though for his remarks to be reproduced in the general form in which they were delivered, rather than in an altered, even if more polished, literary style. The title chosen for the address has been retained for the abbreviated version.

The Name of the Game is Change". So said an able educator not long ago. Whether we like it or not, this is true. There are those who by nature would prefer to have no change, and certainly this attitude is wrong. On the other hand, there are those who gladly assume that any change is for the better. This conviction also is erroneous. But, whether we like it or not, change is a part of life.

Change is characteristic of the world as we know it. Dr. Kenneth Boulding, the distinguished economist, made this fact unforgettably clear in a lecture delivered at Gustavus Adolphus College in 1966. Although then only in his middle fifties, he said of himself and his times: "The world of today is as different from the world in which I was born as that world was

from Julius Caesar's. I was born in the middle of human history, to date, roughly. Almost as much has happened since I was born as happened before." Perhaps that statement is an exaggeration, but not greatly so.

Many of you have read Alvin Toffler's book, *FUTURE SHOCK*, and, if you have not done so, I commend it to you for your examination. The future is rushing in upon us, it seems, at an ever accelerating rate. Change is in the air.

You and I, this afternoon, have been wrestling with change. Whatever the final results of the actions we have taken may be, the situation will be altered by our having been here. Change will come in many ways, and the church is desperately seeking for new methods and better ways.

One change that we need to make, I think, is in our attitude, our orientation toward the future. There is a tendency in society and in the church to glorify the past; to deplore the fact that things are not as they were. This mood of nostalgia has been noted in connection with the music and the amusements of our day. We find it reflected on the part of those, and often I am in their number, who think how much better things were in the old days, and would like to turn the clock backward.

The fact of the matter is, my friends, there *were* no "good old days". There were things in the old days which were good and which we neglect or sacrifice at our deadly peril. There are things in our day also which are good, and sometimes they mark a real advance over the past. In the past which we mistakenly glorify even though there is much which we need to learn from it, human nature was fallen, even as it is today, and sin was at work in society, and in individual life, and in the church.

As we face some of the glaring evils which threaten the very life of civilization in our day, let us remember that men of former generations were guilty of practices which must have been equally grievous in the sight of God. Our fathers, for example, were in large degree blind to the sin of slavery. Little thought was given to the evils of poverty and to crimes committed in war. You and I grew up in blindness to the racial discrimination and injustice which we had inherited from former generations, often accepting these evils as a matter of course. Today we are only gradually learning to see the necessity of bringing racial relationships into accord with the teachings of Christ and our progress in this and other areas is painfully slow. So many blind spots in our past, even as in our present!

No, there *were* no good old days.

Now and again I listen on my radio to a program which some of you hear: "Back to The Bible". It has a good sound about it but the fact of the matter is that, except in knowledge of the Bible, we can't go back to it. We have never come up to it. It is forward to the Bible; it is forward to the service of God!

This was true in the attitude of our Lord himself, for his message dealt with the Kingdom of God and looked forward to the Kingdom of God and the rule of God—that which lies in the future. To be sure the Kingdom of God has its present aspects and the Kingdom of God *is* in our midst, but its fulfillment is yonder, and the Golden Age of Christianity is in the future. The Apostle Paul himself expressed that attitude in the words which we read: "Forgetting those things which are behind". Oh, there was much which he did not forget, but we know his meaning. "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark."

My friends, you and I need to be forgetting many things—our pride, our complacency, our failures—turning our faces to the future with a great sense of urgency and a great sense of expectation. What do we expect in the Church today? So little apparently! In my college days the Student Volunteer Movement was still a power with its slogan, "The Evangelization of the World In This Generation." Who talks about the evangelization of the world at all today, except perhaps the Campus Crusade for Christ? It has a program. But how much do *we* expect? We need a new expectancy, a new hope, a new outward thrust. Yes, and we need a new commitment to Jesus Christ, and a new humble seeking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a new love for one another.

There is much of transformation that is urgently needed. As we go forth from this place, let us go not in sadness because of inevitable change, or in sorrow for the past that will not come again, but in joy as we look to the future which is in the hands of God.

"Friends and loves we have none", wrote John Masefield,

"Nor wealth nor blest abode,

But the hope of the City of God, at the other end of the road.

"Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind,

For we go seeking a city, that we shall never find.

"There is no solace on earth for us—for such as we—
Who search for a hidden city that we shall never see.

"Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind and the rain,
And the watch-fire under stars, and sleep, and the road again.

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"We travel the dusty road, till the light of the day grows dim,
And sunset shows us spires, away on the wide world's rim.

"Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth nor blest abode,
But the hope of the City of God, at the other end of the road."

So let us face change, unafraid. So let us be on our pilgrimage
and our journey as seekers, looking unto Him who is "the author and the
finisher of our faith"; for His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever, Amen!

